

DORA A THERTON; OR, THE SCHOOLMASTER'S DAUGHTER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE VALLEY FARM."

[Entered, according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1851, by Charles J. Peterson, as the proprietor, in the Clerk's Office, of the District Court of the U. S., in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.]

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A NONLE packet ship was coming up the bay of an eastern port, her white sails bellying in the wind, and a hundred eager faces looking over her sides; faces of immigrants taking a first glance of their new country, faces of long-absent Americans gazing upon their native land.

Crowds were upon the quay observing her, and among them a person who stood with folded arms and rapt face, leaning against an upright cannon.

Directly, however, the vessel's canvass began to disappear. A few seamen were first seen to run up the rigging, the massive yards slowly descended, and soon the men were engaged in tying down the sail in its place. Then there was a hoarse order, a rattling sound was heard, and the mighty anchor, with a sullen plunge, descended to its slimy bed. The huge ship now slowly swung to the tide, the waters rippling along the black hull, while her shapely bows lifted and fell in the cross swell.

The moment the packet thus came to rest, like some gigantic bird folding its broad wings, the face of the spectator on the quay changed its aspect. The look of delighted admiration passed away, and one of deep gloom, which appeared to be its settled expression, followed. He sighed, as if regretting the momentary delight into which he had been beguiled, changed his position uneasily, and, at a slight movement in the crowd, looked around him with a quick, searching glance, half of terror, half of defiance. The agitation in the crowd subsiding, he sighed again, as if relieved; and turning his eyes listlessly toward the water, gazed upon the ship once more.

A boat was now putting off from the packet. Four sturdy rowers propelled it rapidly toward the quay, as it danced, like a feather as it was, on the agitated waters. Beside the oarsmen and the man who steered, there was but one person in the boat, who, wrapped in a cloak, and with a cap drawn over his eyes, would not have been recognizable, at that distance, even by his nearest friend.

Gradually, however, the boat approached the quay; the foremost rower dropped his oar, and

seizing the boat-hook, caught at the wharf; the little craft shot up along side; and, in an instant, the solitary passenger had sprung to land, while the boat was flying back to the packet, skimming the waves like a swallow on the wing.

The stranger, after he had leaped ashore, turned a moment to look at the boat, and then began to make his way through the crowd, which opened curiously for him to pass. As he brushed by the individual we have described, his eye casually fell on the latter. Butler, for such was the spectator, saw a face which was entirely new to him, but one of a character that, artist as he was, immediately fixed his attention. The countenance was that of a young man of twenty-five, or thereabouts, full of decision, talent and enthusiasm. The eye was that of an eagle; the temples broad; and the carriage of the head erect; while the expression of the face would have been almost femininely gentle, but for a shade of profound melancholy that rested upon it.

Nor was the traveller less arrested by the face of Butler. Its massive outlines, its look of lofty energy, and the settled gloom that pervaded it, reminding him of a fine landscape overshadowed by a thunder cloud, fixed his attention: and he paused for an instant unconsciously. But meeting the eye of Butler, who was gazing at him, with equal interest, he felt convicted of a breach of etiquette, and raising his cap involuntarily, in apology, passed on. It was an act that Butler, comparatively ignorant of conventional politeness, would never have thought of, under the circumstances; but it heightened, still further, the favorable impression which he had formed of the traveller.

He, therefore, followed the tall and graceful form of the latter, as it receded through the crowd: nor was this difficult, as the traveller stood nearly a head taller than the mass generally. At last, Butler saw him call a carriage, which immediately after whirled off at a rapid pace.

Leaving Butler on the quay, where he remained for some time, let us follow the traveller.

He drove at once to the principal hotel, where he ordered a suite of rooms, and saying that his luggage would arrive as soon as it could be passed through the custom-house, a duty which he had left to his servant, he asked to be shown to his apartments.

"Will you enter your name first, sir?" obsequiously said the clerk, who recognized a man of wealth and position in the new guest.

The stranger took up the pen, and when the clerk had spread the book before him, wrote in a bold, though not ostentatious hand: "PAUL SIDNEY."

"This way, Mr. Sidney," said the clerk, at the same time ringing a bell, which summoned a servant. "Show this gentleman," he continued, addressing the latter, "to No. 12."

Yes, Paul Sidney had returned to his native land, not, as when he went, unknown, but preceded by a name already famed in the world of letters. He returned improved by observation, by study, and by silent thought; in the period during which he had been absent, he had, as it were, lived years. And sorrow had strengthened his character even more than travel.

For what had he thus returned? He could not have told, strange to say, even if he had been asked. After his departure from Henley Abbey, he had contemplated a visit to the far East, and had actually made every preparation for this purpose, when, one night, as he sat lonely and depressed in his rooms at London, a sudden presentiment of evil, if he carried out his design, came over him. He could not account for the feeling, or get rid of it: all through the night it clung to him, it remained with him the next day, it followed him to his rooms again at evening, and it haunted him through the night. An overpowering conviction that he ought to return to America, instead of sailing for Egypt, possessed him like a madness, and he finally yielded to it, altered his plans, and took passage for the United States.

Who has not felt such presentiments? Who has not had cause to bless God for having yielded to them, or to regret unceasingly a refusal to obey their warnings? Those who are of "the earth, earthy," gross, animal, grovelling existences, may sneer at such premonitions as the result of a disordered fancy; but others, who believe in the interposition of spiritual beings, watching over and advising mankind, know well that these warnings come from heaven, and are given perhaps by departed friends, who see what we cannot see, the true angels of the ancient theology.

And Paul was now in America. During the voyage he had reflected on many things, but principally on the duties devolving on him as a

man of wealth. His life, heretofore, had been one of preparation, but now that he was returning to his native soil, he felt that the time for action was approaching. He could not live idle, and he dared not, if he could, for he knew that even riches gave him no right to do this. As a member of society, he had duties to perform, which were all the more stringent because of his wealth. He must work, he felt, for the amelioration of his fellow men, who were less happily situated than himself: but in what particular way he should labor for this great end, he had not yet determined. Sometimes he thought of the pulpit, sometimes of journalism, sometimes of authorship, and sometimes of devoting himself to some grand scheme of social or religious philanthropy.

In this unsettled frame of mind he sat in his apartments now, resolving for the hundredth time his future life. He was roused from his reverie, by the gong sounding for tea. He rose and descended to the dining-room, partook of a cup of the beverage, and then sauntered into the reading-room, to peruse the papers.

By what he felt to be a fatality, the first person his eye rested on, was the stranger he had seen at the quay. Something in the easy negligence of Butler's attire, combined with its economy, revealed to the familiar eye of Paul that the wearer was an artist. Butler was engaged in perusing a newspaper, and did not see Paul, so the latter sat down, and taking up the evening journal, began to read.

Suddenly, however, a cry, that was like the last, despairing exclamation of a breaking heart, arrested Paul's attention. He looked up, and saw Butler, his face white with agony, gazing, with a wild stare of horror and incredulity, on a newspaper, which rattled in his shaking hands.

"Oh! my God," burst from Butler's lips, at last. "Tried for murder—to-morrow, too—and I did it—I, I did it," he added, as with straining eyes he appeared to read again, "and it is too late, too late to save her."

Paul had risen, on seeing this strange demeanor, for he was alone in the room with Butler, and he feared that the latter would fall, for his whole frame shook as if with the palsy. But delicacy kept Paul aloof till the last moment. Suddenly, however, a word from Butler brought the former almost frantically to his side.

"Oh! Miss Atherton," cried Butler, dropping the newspaper on the floor, and burying his face in his hands, "would I could die for you—would I could reach you in time."

Paul did not hear the conclusion of this sentence. At the mention of that name, a terrible suspicion struck him that it was Dora. Dora accused of murder, and wrongfully too, as the

broken exclamations of Butler seemed to imply! Could it be possible? Was she, whom he had thought dead, or lost to him forever, to be restored to him under these circumstances? And was it, indeed, too late to save her?

All these reflections rushed through his mind, during the instant that Butler continued speaking. Then, springing forward, all control of himself for a moment lost, Paul seized Butler's hands, dragged them from his face, and, looking him almost fiercely in the face, demanded,

"Is it of Dora you speak? Tell me, I demand it."

His powerful chest heaved with emotion, as he thus spoke, and his eye gleamed with a look that made even Butler quail. The latter, at being thus rudely seized, frowned angrily at first; but recognizing the traveller, whom he had seen land from the packet, the expression of his countenance changed to extreme surprise.

"Answer me," hoarsely continued Paul, for the moment beside himself, "is it of Dora you speak?"

Butler was, as yet, too bewildered by horror and surprise, to ask himself, what this stranger knew of Dora; and he answered mechanically,

"It is Dora."

"Dora Atherton."

"Yes!"

"An orphan."

"Yes!"

"Good God," cried Paul, dropping Butler's hands, and staggering back as if shot.

It was now Butler's turn to speak. His faculties were beginning to return to him. He saw that some powerful link united this stranger to Dora, and whatever it was, it justified him in appealing for aid and counsel in that quarter. For already, even in that moment of flashing thought, Butler had resolved to return to his native city and confess the homicide if not too late.

"You know Miss Atherton?" he said, in a whisper, approaching Paul, for the room was now filling with people lounging in from tea, and more than one curious eye had been arrested by the latter part of the scene we have been describing. "If so, come to my room."

Paul looked up, arrested by these words. In his exclamation the speaker had accused himself of being the real murderer; these words he knew that Paul had heard; and might it not be that he now wished a private interview, in hopes to quiet forever any possible revelations that Paul might make? But the suspicion was dismissed as soon as it came. "Did he not accuse himself reproachfully?" said Paul, to himself. "And were he ten times more robust, shall I fear for my life, when I have a chance of rescuing Dora?"

In all this, it will be seen, Paul thought only of saving Dora. He did not even stop to think whether Dora, thus accused, could be entirely innocent; could yet, even if innocent of this crime, be worthy of him. He knew her to be in danger, and that was sufficient for him.

"I will follow you," said Paul, mastering his emotions, for he also perceived the curious eyes bent on them: and, as he spoke, with ready presence of mind, he picked up the newspaper which Butler had dropped.

As they left the room, Butler turned to Paul.

"My room is on the fifth floor," he said.

"Have you one nearer?"

Had a suspicion remained in Paul's mind, this question would have banished it. He made no reply, but advanced to the door of his apartment, which stood on the same floor.

Once within the room, and the door locked to prevent interruption, Paul said,

"And she is to be tried to-morrow?"

"She is."

"At —?"

"Yes?"

"And you are the real criminal?"

"I slew the young man," answered Butler, "but I am not even criminal, except in flying, after the accident. But God knows I never thought another, much less Miss Atherton, would suffer for the homicide." And, as he spoke, he wiped from his forehead big drops of perspiration, distilled there by his mental agony.

Paul, with astonishing self-command, for every faculty was now subservient to the speedy unravelling of this mystery, opened the newspaper he had picked up. Butler, who divined his purpose, pointed silently to the paragraph.

It was an account of the opening of the Oyer and Terminer, in Butler's native city; and among the cases mentioned as set down for trial, was that of Dora Atherton, charged with the murder of Henry Thomaston, Jr. This was all.

Paul read it through. Hitherto the consciousness of Dora's peril had only vaguely presented itself to him; it seemed incredible that she should be charged with murder: but now, when he saw the accusation in print, the whole terrible scene of the trial came up before him. He beheld, in fancy, the curious crowd, the jeering attorneys, the hostile witnesses, the prejudiced jury. The picture of Dora, exposed to shame and danger, inflamed him with sudden madness against Butler, who had confessed to being the instrument of her arrest. His eyes gleamed with anger, his face worked convulsively, and, with a spring, he grasped the artist by the throat.

"You have murdered her," he said, "coward, assassin." And he shook fiercely the unresisting Butler.

But the hurricane of revengeful feeling passed as quickly as it came. Paul suddenly let free his captive, turned away as if mistrusting himself, and began to walk the room with hurried strides.

"Friendless, orphaned, deserted even by me," he exclaimed, in broken accents, "and now about to be sacrificed, in her innocence, to an unjust verdict."

But gradually phrenzy at her danger, yielded to schemes for her release. Could nothing be done to save her? We write of a time before railroads were in use, yet still the journey between the city where Paul now was, and that in which Dora was to be tried, could be performed in rather less than sixty hours. On the third day, from this, he reflected, he might reach her side. But of what use could he be unless Butler accompanied him? And would the latter consent to go? Paul, in his first astonishment, had not heard all the exclamations of Butler, or he would have had no doubt on this point. But he resolved that, even if compulsion had to be employed, Butler should go. The trial would probably be protracted for three days. If so, their arrival, before a verdict, would yet save Dora.

He turned and addressed Butler. "Sir, you must go with me," he said, severely, "and to-night. You say you are innocent of intentional murder, that the homicide was accidental. Even if we are too late to preserve Miss Atherton from a shameful condemnation, we may yet, perhaps, save her life."

"I am ready to go," said Butler. "It is what I intended to propose, when I asked you to come to my room. God knows, sir, I am willing to die on the scaffold, if that will expiate my involuntary crime of flight."

Paul looked up, and, after gazing sternly at his face, a moment, said, extending his hand,

"I believe you. Your face is not that of a murderer or a coward. Forgive my hasty words."

Butler was deeply affected. Such generosity, from one whom he had injured, moved him almost to tears. But he kept back his hand.

"No, I cannot take your hand," he said, sadly. "I will never take any fellow creature's hand, until I have rescued Miss Atherton: and never if too late for that," here his voice entirely failed him, and he sobbed aloud.

Paul, who continued to master the outward show of his emotion, gazed pityingly on Butler for a moment, and then rang the bell. A servant soon appeared at the door. After a few low words, the man departed, and Paul turned to Butler, who was now more composed.

"I have given orders to set out," said Paul, "I have found that we are too late, by an hour, for the ordinary line, but we will take a coach and intercept another at W——, which can be done.

You can be ready in fifteen minutes, I suppose."

Not only his words, but his tones and looks showed the energy of his character, when aroused to action. Though impatient to learn the entire story of this strange accusation against Dora, he forbore questioning Butler further, until arrangements were completed for their departure. He would not lose a moment unnecessarily.

"I can be ready in less time," replied Butler. "Will you accompany me to my room?"

Again Paul looked fixedly at him. He divined the reason of 'this offer, and saw, in the frank face of the artist, that it was tendered sincerely: and that was enough to remove suspicion, even if it had arisen.

"No," he said, "I will await you here."

As Butler had promised, he returned, in less than the appointed time. Paul was already prepared. He had thrown a change of clothing into a small valise, given orders to his servant to follow him on the following day with his luggage, and now stood prepared to depart.

The carriage soon rattled to the door of the hotel, and the young men took opposite seats in it. Silence was maintained, until the wheels had left the noisy pavements, and were rolling along, almost without a sound, over the dusty highway. Then Paul turned to his companion.

"Your name," he said.

"James Butler."

"How long have you known Miss Atherton?"

"Nearly a year."

"Where?"

"In ——. She boarded where I did."

"With a relative?"

"No. Mrs. Harper was only a friend."

"How did Miss Atherton live?"

"She was a seamstress."

"So poor," murmured Paul. Then he asked.

"Was she happy?"

"She made the best of her situation, sir, though she had seen better days, and that made it harder. But she is an angel. And, save for some secret sorrow, the cause of which I never knew, I should say she was happy. She is too good a Christian not to be happy."

Paul was silent awhile from emotion. But again he resumed.

"How is it," he said, "that you have only, to-day, discovered that another person has been arrested for this homicide?"

"When I left ——" said Butler, "after the affray, I strove to fly from myself: and, on reaching the neighboring city, embarked for a southern port. For months I travelled, from one plantation to another, in the wildest districts of the far south-west, without seeing a newspaper: indeed without caring to inquire for one. I never

wished, in fact, to hear from my native city again. Though guiltless of intentional homicide, the blood of a fellow creature was nevertheless on my hands; this I strove to forget; and hence the mention of the place where he and I had lived became distasteful, for it kept recollection alive. But I found that, though I could fly from the scene of my error, I could not fly from my conscience. A voice within was continually telling me that I had done wrong in leaving, and that I ought to return and face the accusation. But I little imagined that another had been arrested for my crime. And even yet I cannot fully comprehend it. It was only this morning that I arrived, in a packet, from New Orleans, with the half formed determination of returning to —, as soon as I had accumulated the means, for my purse had been exhausted by the voyage. I so little comprehend how Miss Atherton can have become complicated in the matter, that I begin to persuade myself she must be acquitted."

"Not unless we reach — in time," replied Paul.

"Do you know the circumstances of the charge, that you speak so hopelessly?"

"I sent to the reading-room, for the file of papers from —," said Paul, "but they had been destroyed within a few days. Four were all that remained, except the stray one, which you, I believe, picked up from the table, and which contained the terrible announcement. There was not time to send to the newspaper offices, or we might have learned something there. However, in looking over the journal, while you were preparing, I read an article, in another column, which detailed the evidence; and it was frightful." He continued with emotion, his studied calmness again giving way, "God of heaven, how is it that thou canst suffer innocence, thus to wear the guise of guilt?"

Butler was too awed to address his companion, for some time. When, at last, he spoke, it was to inquire, in a faltering voice, what was the nature of the evidence.

Paul had now regained, once more, the control of himself; and accordingly he proceeded to narrate the chain of testimony against Dora, such as has been already laid before the reader.

"It is horrible," said Paul, "for every incident fits into some other one, and the whole charge is, as it were, dove-tailed into one compact proof of guilt. Yet I know her to be too pure," and Butler, even through the gloom, saw the ghastly look, which even the bare idea of her guilt called up into his face, and shuddered to behold it, "I know her to be too pure, for me to credit the half of what is testified to. She eager for the attentions of this young profligate! She walking with him, as a leman, out in the country! It is impossible."

"It is," interrupted Butler, eagerly, for he saw he could explain many of these things. "It is with me she was walking on that fatal afternoon. I see it all now. She must have heard the shot, run back, and been found with the body. The persecutions, she had before suffered, have been distorted; and she has been thought to have killed him in revenge. But you shall hear the whole story, which I would have told you before; if there had been opportunity; and then you will see how she has been wronged."

And Butler, as the carriage whirled along through the increasing darkness, took up the history of Dora, from the moment he became acquainted with her, narrating it down to the very day of his flight.

Paul listened to the tale with varying emotions. Much that Butler could not explain, his own heart could supply; and though he was still ignorant of all Dora's sufferings, he conjectured that there had been many, especially mental ones, of which Butler knew nothing. When the speaker told of her cheerfulness in poverty, of her efforts to save Susan, and of her expostulations with him for his infidelity, Paul secretly blessed heaven that the priceless treasure of such a heart had once been his, even if since lost to him. But when Butler described the insults to which she had been subjected, and his own intervention on one of these occasions, his hearer's eyes flashed with indignation, and his hands clenched involuntarily. And again, when the narrator rehearsed her destitution, before she came to Mrs. Harper, as he had heard it from the landlady, Paul reproached himself, at every sentence, with having gone abroad, when he might, perhaps, have rescued her. Alas! he forgot that these sufferings had all been experienced, during that terrible winter, when he was employing every possible means to discover her retreat. At last he remembered this, and then he felt that fate had been mightier than he, or rather that God, who works not as men work, had over-ruled events, for what end Paul could not yet see. Nay! he shuddered when that probable end suggested itself to him.

"Perhaps," he thought, with a groan, "Dora is the sacrifice, by which I am to be brought to do some great labor, which heaven designs laying upon me." And broken in spirit, he continued, with an inward ejaculation, "the will of God be done, but oh! if not too late, may the suffering as well as the labor be mine, and she be saved."

Terrible was the suspense of that night to both travellers. The sky gradually lowered into a storm, and, as the carriage rattled on, the rain descended in floods. The profound darkness rendered the way perilous in the extreme, while the sudden swelling of the streams, endangered

the bridges, and made the successful prosecution of the journey hourly more problematical. Continually, as the rapid wheels jolted over a stone, or crashed into a deep rut, the young men thought their vehicle was upsetting: but still it kept bravely on, as if conscious of the mighty interests with which it was charged.

At last, in descending a mountain ravine, toward midnight, a sudden flash of lightning

startled the horses, who sprang wildly aside; and, in a moment, the occupants of the carriage felt it descending headlong, as if over a precipice. Both Paul and Butler sprang to their feet, each with his hand on an opposite door, but before they could turn the handle, there came a loud crash, the coach was crushed into a shapeless mass, and its inmates sank senseless among the ruins. (TO BE CONTINUED.)

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 156.

It is not our intention to describe all the formalities of a judicial trial, for abler pens than ours have rendered the scene familiar to the general reader.

The court-room, on the morning of Dora's arraignment, presented an unusually animated spectacle. Even an ordinary case of murder is sure to attract a crowd, but hers had so many features of interest in it that, long before the hour of opening the court, a dense mass of people pressed against the doorway and blocked up the huge hall leading to it from the street.

When the entrance was thrown open the rush was tumultuous. Some persons were taken off their feet by the torrent; others were knocked down; and innumerable were the hats that were crushed out of all shape. In less than five minutes every bench was occupied, and every inch of standing ground taken up. Men even climbed up into the window-seats, where they hung on by the casements. It required the most vigorous efforts, on the part of the officers, to keep the crowd from encroaching on the space set apart for the lawyers, a small square bit of room, railed off from the rest of the apartment, directly in front of the seats of the judges.

One side of the court-house had been already filled with ladies, admitted at a private door before the principal entrance was thrown open. For the romantic interest attached to the case having embarked many of her own sex in Dora's favor, had led them to solicit the unusual privilege of having seats reserved for them at the trial. Others, though merely attracted by curiosity, had availed themselves of the opportunity to see a fellow creature tried for her life.

Among these, as among the remainder of the audience, the time between their own entrance and that of the judges, was spent in speculations as to the prisoner's guilt. Perhaps the crowd was about equally divided on this question. The majority of her own sex believed firmly in Dora's innocence, while the bulk of the other regarded her as the murderer. The latter looked only at the evidence, which they pronounced irresistible:

the former took into consideration Dora's character, and were moved also by pity.

"I will never believe but what she did it in self-defence," said a big, turbulent woman, a notorious scold, and none other indeed than the one who had first told Mrs. Harper of Dora's arrest. She had pushed her way between the front row of ladies and the space set apart for the lawyers, and now demeaned herself with much importance, on the strength of having resided near Mrs. Harper, and having often seen Dora go in and out, which made her consider the prisoner a sort of acquaintance. "The young man," she said, "was a bad one, while she was a sweet lamb of a creature, not giddy like most girls, and regular in going to church."

Her husband, a little man with big whiskers, who had crowded close to her, ventured to remonstrate, a thing he rarely undertook, but which, perhaps, he was now tempted to do in order to exhibit his authority.

"It's still water that runs deep, my dear," he remarked. "We don't know by what false representations the young man got the advantage of this girl, perhaps he promised to marry her, I've no doubt he did; and, having deceived her, a quiet, decent behaved young woman was more apt to take it to heart, and seek revenge, than one of your giddy creatures, who could have a good cry, and then forget it. I'm positive she killed the fellow——"

He had proceeded thus far manfully, in spite of the warning eyes of his buxom dame, but now she broke out.

"And I tell *you*, John Warner," she said, decisively, "that she didn't do it."

The usually meek husband caught a sound something like a titter, and looking around saw that several persons were smiling at him. This stimulated his courage, and he answered sharply,

"And I tell *you*, wife, that he didn't. They met, I have no doubt, by appointment: one witness, you know, swore on the examination to seeing them enter the wood together;" here he looked around with an important air, as if to

challenge attention to his knowledge of the case, "in the wood she must have urged him to keep his promise; he refused; and then, watching her chance, she shot him with his own gun. That's the only way to reconcile all the facts. He couldn't have shot himself, could he?"

His domineering dame had been struck dumb with amazement, at first; but, on hearing this taunt, she recovered, and at once poured forth a flood of indignant eloquence.

"Don't talk like a fool, Johnny Warner," using the diminutive, which she always employed, when she wished to express her contempt for him. "I'd like to know what you can tell about it? You wasn't there, were you? Oh! no, you weren't, you say. Well then what's most likely, that a wicked, dissipated, spendthrift, impertinent, good-for-nothing young scape-grace should insult an honest girl, and be served as he deserved, or that she should kill him in self-defense? I'd have shot him too," she added, her face flushed with indignant anger, for she had a generous heart in spite of being a virago; and, as she spoke, she brandished a brawny arm, which made some of her near neighbors start back. "I'd have shot him too. Though, for that matter, its not so clear she shot him at all. I'd better believe her, you know, John Warner, than a whole market full of witnesses like that low fellow you tell about. She didn't do it, it was Mr. Butler, she and Mrs. Harper tell the truth. Nobody could persuade me," she continued, looking savagely around, "that this young scape-grace who was killed ever got the upper hand of Miss Atherton, who wouldn't, I am sure, allow such a villain and blackguard as all accounts say he was, even to kiss her shoe."

"Hush!" said a bystander, glancing at a group a few benches off, "there's some of his relations."

"And what do I care?" said the virago, lowering her voice nevertheless. "Ain't this a free country? Can't one speak the truth? If some people are afraid of other people's feelings being hurt, they had better stay away from here, and keep the others away too. You're a relation too, I spose."

The speaker, who was a young man, shrank back discomfited; for a general titter went round at his expense. His place, however, was taken by another, a portly, good-humored man of middle age, who, with a sly wink at the spectators, proceeded to amuse himself with the virago.

"My good woman," he said, "your friend, the prisoner," and here the crowd laughed to hear the accused called the virago's friend, while he continued, emphasizing the word again, "your friend is certain to be convicted. Everybody knows what sort of girls seamstresses are, at

least those who work for the slop-shops: and its twice as probable, therefore, that she shot the young man as that she didn't. As for the story she has trumped up about some fellow boarder having killed him, nobody but a fool would believe that."

At this bold interruption the virago looked at the speaker, as much as to say "and who are you?" But when he finished, raising the laugh on her again, she flared up angrily. Putting her arms akimbo, her eyes blazing, and her face redder than ever, she began,

"Who do you call a fool, sir? I'll have you know I've got as much in my head as there is in a dozen like yours." Here there was a laugh at the stranger, on which the virago, with new energy, went on. "And because she was a seamstress, you think her a murderer. I don't believe your mother was as good as a seamstress. Who are you yourself? You look like a pork-butcher——"

But here her antagonist, who did not seem to mind the laugh against him, in the least, interposed, looking around at the crowd of men and boys at his side.

"And you're a fish-huckster, aunty, ain't you? I think I bought a shad of you, yesterday, that was almost as old as you are yourself."

This retort, which hit the truth exactly, as some of the miscellaneous crowd knew, produced shouts of laughter, which drowned entirely the angry rejoinders of his antagonist. How much longer the scene might have been protracted, we cannot tell; but at this moment, the officers of the court stepped forth, enjoining silence, at which the portly speaker, inwardly laughing, dropped back again into his place. But the virago was not so easily controlled. She turned toward her retreating antagonist, shaking her brawny fist at him, and following him with volleys of abuse, till the tipstaves told her that, if she did not keep quiet, they would arrest and remove her from the court. At this threat her violence of tongue subsided, and she remained crest-fallen and sulky, though a low muttering, like distant thunder, continued for some time to show that her rage was only suppressed, not removed.

To most of the ladies present this scene had afforded infinite disgust. Unused to court-rooms, and about for the first time to see a fellow creature tried for murder, it jarred on the solemnity of the scene. But even these, if favorably affected toward the prisoner, could not but admire the sturdiness with which the virago had defended the accused, even while loathing her for her vulgarity. But the great body of spectators, who were low-bred men and boys, had enjoyed the scene hugely, beholding nothing out of place in it, for they had been accustomed to see the hour

of waiting before trial enlivened by similar passages of coarse wit.

While all this was going on, the bar, as the space reserved for the lawyers is called, had been slowly filling up. First came a number of well dressed, but exceedingly young men, most of them mere lads in fact, who, singly, or in pairs, entered by a side-door, seeming to be known to the officers. These were the law-students, who, having the entree of the bar, came early in order to secure a good seat. They were soon followed by the attorneys, who dropped in, one after another, with their green bags, some remaining a minute or two to look at the array of pretty faces, and then hastening away to other courts where they had cases on for trial, others taking a seat intending to remain, and always selecting one facing the ladies, until that side of the bar was entirely filled. At last entered the counsel for the prisoner, who were two in number. One we have already introduced to the reader. The other was dressed with excessive neatness, and even considerable effort at display, wearing silk stockings and sporting a costly diamond ring. His first act was to place his hat on the table and throw his green bag by its side; then, taking out a valuable gold snuff-box, he handed it around to various brother attorneys, smiling blandly, and exhibiting a splendid set of the whitest teeth in so doing. After this, taking a pinch himself, he looked about him with something of an important air, which did not appear to be entirely uncalled for, since the crowd generally gazed at him with great awe and admiration, for he was, in fact, the leading criminal lawyer at the bar, and had only escaped being retained by Mr. Thomaston, in consequence of having been out of town.

Immediately after, by the same side-door at which the students and attorneys had entered, appeared the judges, who came unostentatiously, one by one. At this there was a general hush. Taking their seats, the President Judge nodded to the crier, a shock-headed, sleepy fellow, sitting to one side, in front of their own elevated platform. He rose immediately, and in a nasal, monotonous tone began a form of proclamation, of which the burden seemed to be to summon suitors and witnesses to appear. But little, however, was clearly distinguishable, except, "oh, yes," repeated twice at the beginning, and "God save the commonwealth and the honorable court," with which he concluded in a sort of singing tone. Then he sat down, and as there was some shuffling of feet, looked up again testily and cried, "silence." The noise not immediately ceasing, a tipstaff at the side of the bar, repeated, "silence," and, like echoes, from each corner of the room, other tipstaves gruffly exclaimed, "silence."

It was less these pompous cries than a consciousness of what came next, however, that produced in a moment the most profound quiet. Not a breath was now heard. Every eye was turned toward the side entrance.

The cause of all this was that a carriage had been heard to drive up, and it was known that the prisoner was about to be introduced.

The door swung open, when proceeded and followed by officers, and attended by Mrs. Harper, Dora entered. She walked with a quick step to the seat prepared for her, her eyes bent on the ground, and a veil drawn closely over her face to conceal the features.

Few of the spectators had ever seen her before. All, however, had formed some idea of her, but generally one distant from the truth. Her graceful figure was so much more lady-like, if we may use the expression, than they had expected from her position in life, that they were taken by surprise, especially the female portion; and a low murmur of admiration went around the room.

Dora did not look up for some time, baffling every plan to catch a glimpse of her face. Not that she thought of thus defeating curiosity. But, notwithstanding every consolation of religion, notwithstanding also the protecting presence of Mrs. Harper, she felt so utterly abased, to find herself arraigned on this terrible charge, that she could not look up. She took shelter, therefore, behind her veil, praying continually for strength, and often pressing Mrs. Harper's hand, which lay within her own.

The audience, rude as it was in many respects, appeared to divine something of her feelings, and gazed at her motionless figure in silent respect, without indulging in the rude remarks common on similar occasions.

The formalities now began. The indictment was read and the prisoner regularly arraigned. When her counsel, approaching her, whispered that it was necessary she should plead, Dora put aside her veil, and looked up for the first time. The glance that was revealed of her sweet, half-frightened face predisposed those who saw it in her favor immediately. After she had, in a low, but distinct voice, pleaded "not guilty," she glanced, for a moment, around the room. Those who saw that look never forgot it. They could read, as plainly as if they beheld it written on her heart, the feelings of shame, repugnance, hopelessness and desolation, which came over her as she witnessed those tiers on tiers of human faces, rising high on every side from the floor almost to the ceiling, among whom she did not recognize a solitary friend. A perceptible shudder passed over her, she clasped her hands, and dropping her face returned again to the concealment of her veil. Nor did she again look up

until, in empannelling the jury, her attorney de-
sired her to pronounce on each man that was
called, and challenge whom she pleased. Then
she put aside her veil firmly, gazed steadfastly
on each juror, and peremptorily challenged three
in whose faces she thought she saw something
sinister.

The jury having been empannelled, the states'
attorney arose. His personal appearance, which
was eminently majestic; his historic name; and
the fact that he had himself filled high offices,
rendered his influence over a jury even greater
than his oratorical powers, superior as they were,
would have caused alone. He looked silently,
for a moment, on the jury, raising his dignified
form to its full height; his proud head, with its
masses of snow-white hair, thrown slightly back;
his lips compressed; and his eagle eye reading
each man's character in the face. Then, with a
bow to court and jury, and a graceful waive of
the hand toward the prisoner, he began his exor-
dium.

With consummate art, he declared that, never
in his life, had he been called upon to perform a
more painful duty. His heart bled, he said, to
find himself before their Honors on this occasion.
To the superficial mind it might seem cruel, he
remarked, for him to be there, asking for the
condemnation of one so young, beautiful and
orphaned as the prisoner at the bar. But he
would beg the jury to remember that there was
another picture which might be conjured up:
that of an innocent and happy household, made
desolate by death, where parents wept for their
only son, and sisters lamented a murdered brother.
He would remind the court that a false
sympathy abetted crime, and that for jurors to
pity where they should condemn, was perjury.
"Yes, perjury, gentlemen," he continued, dwell-
ing on the words; "you add a crime of your own
to that of the prisoner, and add it, too, in vain;
for though the accused may escape your verdict,
she cannot that of heaven. The blood of Abel
cries from the ground."

So impressively were these words delivered,
and with such unequalled action, that a shudder
ran through the court-room, and hundred of eyes
glanced toward the prisoner, as if almost expect-
ing to see her forehead branded like that of Cain.
The orator paused a moment to notice the effect
of his exordium, when, satisfied with the result,
he resumed.

We need not, however, follow him through his
speech. The chain of evidence, by which he
sought to convict Dora, is already known to the
reader. Link by link he laid the case before the
jury, as he expected to prove it; yet all this he
did, with the words and air of one who was per-
forming a painful duty. The effect, in conse-

quence, was profound. The spectators, when he
sat down, looked at each other, and remarked, in
whispers, that if he had witnesses for all he said,
the guilt of the prisoner was clear.

This sentiment became stronger as the testi-
mony came out. The evidence of the watchman,
who had seen Dora strike the deceased in the
street, and that of the two men who had found
her with the corpse produced a particularly deep
impression. When one of these witnesses de-
scribed how, at their approach, Dora was endea-
voring to escape, but that the faithful dog, tugging
at her dress, restrained her, an audible exclama-
tion rose from the crowd; for all considered it a
Providential interference, by which a dumb beast
was made the instrument to detect a murder.
Perhaps, at that moment, not a solitary spectator
but believed that Dora was guilty. Her warmest
partizans went no further than to hope that, in a
moment of phrenzy at remembering her wrongs,
she had fired the fatal shot.

Satisfied with having, as he believed, proved
the homicide, and produced the impression that
malice had existed between the prisoner and de-
ceased, the states' attorney rested his case. And
now the counsel for the defence arose.

Never did this brilliant advocate exert himself
more; for he felt that, if eloquence could not save
Dora, the evidence would not. For, in truth, he
had nothing to offer, in proof, against the well-
compacted mass of testimony for the prosecution,
except a few witnesses as to the spotless charac-
ter of his client. While enlarging on the nature
of his evidence, however, he labored adroitly to
enlist sympathy for Dora: and with such suc-
cess that he soon had the female portion of his
audience deluged in tears. Had the verdict de-
pended on them, perhaps, Dora would have been
acquitted, without further evidence. But the jury
was composed of sterner material, as appeared
from the impatience which one or two exhibited,
when the orator was endeavoring to entrap their
judgment. The judge also regarded the speaker
coldly. At last the advocate sat down, after a
peroration that thrilled every heart, convinced
that his eloquence was in vain; and he whispered
this conviction to his colleague, over a pinch of
snuff, while the first witness was being called.

Among others who were produced to prove char-
acter, as it is technically denominated, that is to
show that Dora could not possibly have committed
so foul a crime as murder, were the innkeeper,
where she had lived awhile after her father's
death, and the venerable pastor, both of whom
had travelled hundreds of miles to befriend her
on this occasion. The manner in which the
grey-haired man of God spoke of her purity of
heart, the indignation with which he repelled the
foul charge, and the equally foul insinuations of,

the states' attorney, made Dora's eyes irresistibly overflow. This was the only occasion, on the whole trial, when her fortitude gave way. She fairly sobbed aloud.

When this meagre testimony had been concluded, for evidence as to character in trials for murder is meagre indeed, since few persons are believed capable of this heinous crime until they have actually committed it, a general look of disappointment passed around the court-room. Even those who had believed in Dora's guilt, had supposed that some testimony favorable to her, they scarcely knew what, would be produced; while those who had hoped in her innocence, had persuaded themselves that the participation of Butler in the homicide, would yet be established. The complete failure to rebut any material part of the charge chilled the hearts of the latter with ominous forebodings.

It was in this state of mind that the audience left the court-room at the close of the second day's proceedings; for the arraignment of Dora, the empannelling of the jury and the examination of witnesses had occupied this period.

On the following day, which was expected to be the last of the trial, the room was even more densely crowded than before. The feeling was now almost universal that Dora would be convicted. This belief exhibited itself in whispered conversations, until the court was opened and the business of the day formally resumed.

The states' attorney now addressed the jury, and was followed by the counsel for Dora, after which the former concluded the case, answering the various arguments in her favor. The idea that Butler had committed the murder, which Dora's counsel had dwelt on with great stress, he ridiculed as the lame invention of guilt. "For where is this convenient Mr. Butler," he asked, "who is accused of having perpetrated the crime? Could not the prisoner, in all the months that have elapsed since her arrest, have discovered his abode? Why is he not here? Gentlemen, if the defence believed this tale of theirs, they would have searched the continent over, but that they would have had Mr. Butler present. They would have confronted him with the accused, and awed him thus into a confession. But they have not done this, and we must conclude that they could not."

The judge next proceeded to sum up the evidence and charge the jury. From the first it was apparent that he believed in the guilt of Dora, and that he considered it his duty to bring the jury over to the same opinion. He warned them, with a meaning glance at the prisoner's senior counsel, to beware of the illusions of eloquence. Their path, he said, was plain. They had to do with the facts as proved in evidence,

and with nothing else. "You have heard much, gentlemen," he said, "about a Mr. Butler, who is asserted to have committed this murder; but," here he raised his voice, looking meaningly at Dora's attorney, "not a tittle of this is in evidence. I ought, perhaps, to have checked the prisoner's counsel, when he introduced this tale into his remarks; but I was willing, considering the peculiar circumstances of the case, to allow him unusual license; and I knew, besides, that I could, at the proper time, guard you against the story. I now tell you that you must decide the guilt or innocence of the accused, without the slightest reference to this tale, which, I again warn you, is not proved. You are sworn, you will remember, a true verdict to give *according to the evidence*; and you must not allow yourselves to be biassed by the assertions of counsel."

The judge then recapitulated what was in evidence, both for the prosecution, and also for the defence. He summed up in these decisive words, "the existence of malice on the part of the prisoner toward the deceased, *prior to the murder*, is not, I think, positively proved: but this is a question for you to decide. The point, however, is of little importance, since the law presupposes malice, in all cases of homicide where the death is not by an accidental blow, in self-defence, or in a sudden fray. The death, in this case, could not have arisen in either of these ways, unless in a sudden fray; but even this is not likely, where one antagonist was a strong man, and the other a comparatively weak girl. It is far more probable that the prisoner, when the deceased was off his guard, suddenly snatched the gun and shot him, thinking that the loneliness of the wood would prevent the discovery of the body until after her escape. However this is a point for you to decide.

"As to the dog, I must remind you that the instinct of this species of animal is proverbial; and his conduct, therefore, is exceedingly significant, at least in my opinion. But this also is a question for the jury. The case, you see, turns on several facts, no one conclusive in itself, but all, when united, of great weight. Indeed proof of this description is more apt to be correct than direct testimony; for while one witness, swearing he sees a murder may be a perjurer, half a dozen, swearing to different facts which together establish a murder, cannot rationally be suspected of false oaths. And now I leave the case with you; and God send you a righteous judgment."

As the judge concluded, Dora's counsel looked at the jurymen, for his practised eye was accustomed to reading thus, in advance, the fate of his clients. He saw, as he had expected, that there was no hope. With the composure of long habit he turned to his colleague and whispered,

"It is all over. That charge killed us."

"Yet I believe in her innocence, as I believe in heaven," replied the other, sadly.

"So do I," answered the advocate. "What now?" This question was addressed to a tipstaff, who had touched him on the shoulder. The officer bent down and whispered something, to which the lawyer listened impassively. Those, however, who had noticed this incident, soon had their attention withdrawn by the states' attorney rising and addressing the court.

"May it please your honor," he said, "there is one point in the case I overlooked: it is in reference to the powder mark, on the hand of the prisoner, at the time of her discovery with the corpse. This is an important fact, which I desire to put in evidence, as showing that the accused had handled the gun, and, therefore, of course, fired it."

In an instant, however, the junior counsel for Dora sprang to his feet; for his colleague, being still engaged with the officer, did not appear to notice the request.

"This is out of all rule, your honor," he hastily cried, addressing the court. "The case is now closed."

"Yet a verdict for the commonwealth may depend on it," interposed the states' attorney.

At this point the senior counsel appeared to become conscious, for the first time, of the colloquy. He waived to the officer to leave him, and raised his head inquiringly. His colleague eagerly leaned over the table, explaining the demand of the states' attorney, and vociferating against its irregularity, injustice, and cruelty.

"It's horrible," he said, "to deprive her of her only chance: and when the oversight was his own."

The senior counsel nodded his head once or twice, and slowly rose to his feet, tapping his snuff-box. It was astonishing to observe how long habit had schooled his demeanor; for while his younger colleague was flushed with excitement, he was cool and smiling as if nothing out of place was transacting.

"Does my honorable brother," he said, looking at the states' attorney, while his fine teeth glistened as he blandly smiled, "wish to introduce new evidence?"

"I do," replied that personage.

"And you object, of course," interposed the judge, rising as if impatient. And turning to the states' attorney, he said, "you should have thought of this before. It is too late now, out of all rule, you know. Gentlemen of the jury, you can retire."

He waived his hand to the jury, who, during this rapid colloquy, had been standing, hats in hand, turning in perplexity from court to

lawyers. A shuffling of feet was heard, as they began to move; but it was stopped by a rapid gesture of the senior counsel's arm.

"But I don't object, your honor," he said, again showing those fine teeth, in that blandest of smiles. "Let Mr. States' Attorney prove all he can."

"That alters the case," said the judge, resuming his seat.

The junior counsel seemed, for a moment, stupified by this concession of his colleague. But, in an instant, he recovered himself, and leaning agitatedly over the table, exclaimed,

"Are you mad? You are ruining us. For God's sake revoke your concession."

But the only answer of the senior counsel was an impatient waive of the hand, which might mean that the case was hopeless before, or that he did not wish to be disturbed while the witness was being examined, for the man was already on the stand.

Meantime every ear was listening; every head leaned forward. The crowd of attorneys, one and all, looked puzzled, for they could see nothing but a foolish generosity in this concession; the spectators generally wore an expression of inquiry on their faces, mixed with renewed interest; the jury appeared bored; and the judge mended a pen. Dora, almost for the first time since the trial began, was entirely overlooked, every gaze being concentrated on the witnesses, the states' attorney, and the senior counsel. She herself caught the intense interest of the rest; but a terrible fear was added to it, for she had overheard her junior counsel's remonstrance. With her veil pushed back, therefore, and her head advanced, she watched, with a pale cheek and parted lips, the termination of the scene.

The testimony of the witness was soon given. When it was finished, the states' attorney looked at the senior counsel, and said, "do you wish to cross-examine?"

"I have nothing to ask," said the latter.

Both states' attorney and judge turned simultaneously to the jury, not noticing that the senior counsel was rising, in his usual deliberate manner, snuff-box in hand.

His voice, however, soon caused both to look toward him.

"One moment, your honor," he said, and now his teeth shone whiter than ever, and unrivalled was the blandness of that smile. "I intend to offer rebutting evidence."

The states' attorney looked up inquiringly at the judge.

"Oh! it's all regular," significantly interposed the senior counsel, "as your honor can inform my learned friend. He introduces new testimony and I offer rebutting evidence."

"But it must be strictly rebutting evidence," said the states' attorney, addressing the judge. "He can't intend to prove, by another witness," he continued, with an incredulous smile, "that the prisoner's hand was not soiled, for there is no other witness."

"That is my business," replied the senior counsel. "The court will see that I shall not travel out of the record. The states' attorney proves that the prisoner shot the deceased, by showing that powder marks were on her hands when she was arrested; and I have the right to show the contrary, have I not? That's rebutter, is it not? Your honor looks yes. Well, your honor knows, I always speak by the card."

"Call your witness," said the judge.

The senior counsel turned, and beckoned to the tipstaff, who, a few minutes before, had addressed him. The latter stepped up to the side of the clerk, every eye following him, for the curiosity had now grown intense beyond conception, no one imagining what was to follow, though, from the triumphant air of the senior counsel, and the popular opinion of his inexhaustible resources, all expected something startling.

Every eye, therefore, as we have said, was on the crier, as the tipstaff whispered to him. The crier, it was noticed, started, and looked doubtfully at his brother officer; but the latter nodded significantly.

Then the crier raised his voice and called the witness, in the same sonorous tone in which he had called the preceding ones.

"James Butler."

Had the trumpet of an archangel sounded, the effect could scarcely have been more unexpected or startling. The states' attorney turned his head quickly, toward the door, with an amazed air; and his example was imitated by court, jurymen and spectators. Only the senior counsel remained unmoved. It was worth all the annoyance of a day's sitting in that crowded, ill-ventilated room, to see the triumphant manner with which, throwing himself back in his chair, he beheld the astonishment he had created.

But of the persons there, the one most affected was Dora. At the sound of that name she started to her feet, her whole face irradiated with joy. This lasted but for a second, however, and was succeeded by an air of bewilderment, then by one of despair, as she gazed around the room, evidently looking for some one whom she did not recognize. Mrs. Harper, who had remained by her the whole day, was scarcely less agitated; and seemed to share entirely in these fluctuations of hope and the reverse.

The blood which at first had mantled over the countenance of Dora, and dyed even her fingers ends of a rosy hue, had now left her whiter than

wax. She trembled visibly. Suddenly, however, the crimson current rushed again to the very temples, while a glad cry sprang to her lips, as she pointed toward the side-entrance; and Mrs. Harper, following the direction of her extended arm, saw emerging from the crowd that blocked up the door, a form which she recognized at once.

Yes! there stood Butler himself, wan indeed and travel-soiled, with one arm in a sling, but still himself, alive, and voluntarily present, to judge by the alacrity with which he came forward.

For an instant Dora, with parted lips and dilated eyes, gazed at him, as if still doubtful; but the reality of his presence forcing itself upon her, she finally sank fainting into the arms of Mrs. Harper.

All was confusion. The attention, which had been concentrated on Butler, was at this partly diverted to Dora. Exclamations of pity, admiration and astonishment burst, by turns, from the crowd, the most skeptical of which now unanimously regarded the prisoner as persecuted. A dozen vinaigrette bottles were tendered from ladies present; glasses of water were handed over from bench and bar; and the mobs in the windows even vacated their places, in order to give her fresh air. She soon, by these means, revived.

It had been necessary to remove her bonnet, and her countenance being thus, for the first time, fully exposed, its beauty, rendered more spiritual by her languor, struck every beholder with awe. Amid other exclamations of admiration was heard that of the virago, who cried, "she's an angel, and nothing else," sobbing hysterically, yet looking fiercely around, as if she would like to see who would dare to call it in question.

At last, when order had been somewhat restored, the witness was sworn. In a clear, straight-forward manner, which carried conviction of the truth to every heart, Butler detailed his accidental encounter with the deceased, the angry conversation that followed, the threat of the latter to shoot, the scuffle, and the death of the profligate.

The cross-examination by the states' attorney was long and searching, but it failed entirely to shake the credibility of the witness. The only apparent advantage of the lawyer was when, with an incredulous air, he asked why, if the witness had fled at first, he had now come back. But this advantage was short-lived, the reply of Butler destroying the momentary triumph.

"I fled," he answered, "because I was unnerved, and scarcely knew what I did. It is an awful thing, sir, to feel that you have killed a fellow being, even by accident. I remained away, thinking that no good could come of my return,

and trusting, in new scenes, to recover my tone of mind. But it would not do. And, at last, I resolved to come back, reveal my secret, and take whatever consequences might ensue, rather than carry it in my bosom forever, eating out my heart. But for the overturning of a coach I should have been here this morning. Thank God I am not, even yet, too late."

This was decisive. Already the spectators began to murmur, and bend frowns on the states' attorney, for his incredulity, which all considered needless. He seemed to have come to a similar conclusion himself, for, after a few more questions, he threw down his papers and signified that he gave up the case.

The judge now turned to the jury.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I think the question is clear; but you can retire if you wish."

"No, your honor, we will give our verdict from the box," answered the foreman. "We have had some talk about it, and all unite in pronouncing the prisoner not guilty."

Scarcely had the words left his mouth, when the sympathy for Dora, which had been increasing

in intensity ever since Butler's announcement, could no longer restrain itself, but found vent in tumultuous huzzas, which shook the old courthouse to its foundations, and dying away from momentary exhaustion, were renewed and renewed again. In vain the judge frowned; in vain the crier called for silence; in vain the tipstaves looked around to arrest offenders, for all were such. The boys, scattered through the crowd, threw up their caps; the ladies waved their handkerchiefs and wept; and more than one of the younger attorneys, forgetting time and place, clapped their hands and shouted with the rest. The crowd outside, meantime, caught up the news and huzzed far and near.

Quiet was restored at last, when the verdict was formally received and formally entered, though with great danger of the excitement breaking out afresh.

In the midst of this tumult Dora, assisted by Mrs. Harper and her counsel, the crowd enthusiastically making way for her, left the courtroom.

(TO BE CONCLUDED.)

DORA A THERTON; OR, THE SCHOOLMASTER'S DAUGHTER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE VALLEY FARM."

[Entered, according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1851, by Charles J. Peterson, as the proprietor, in the Clerk's Office, of the District Court of the U. S., in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.]

CONCLUDED FROM PAGE 188.

THE opportune arrival of Butler has been explained, in part, already; but a few words more will be necessary to render everything clear.

Stunned by the shock, when the carriage upset, Paul and Butler lay, for some time, insensible under the ruins. But the driver, who had escaped unhurt, having proceeded to remove the fragments of the vehicle, they were soon extricated, and with their release recovered consciousness.

Butler's arm, however, had been broken by the crash, and, as the nearest village was two miles distant, many hours were lost before it could be set. In this way the line to — was missed, and nearly a whole day lost.

We return now to Dora.

The carriage, which bore her off, drove immediately to Mrs. Harper's. Scarcely realizing that the events of the day were not a dream, she entered the little parlor, where a still further surprise awaited her.

For there stood Paul. Unobserved he had watched her in the court-house, and when the verdict was given, had hurried to Mrs. Harper's, for there, Butler said, she would be sure to go.

He advanced, eagerly smiling.

"Dora!" he said.

For a moment pride and suspicion ruled in Dora's bosom. But that frank smile, the tone of voice, the expression of the eye, these, she reflected, could not belong to a traitor; there must, as she had often hoped, have been some mistake, now about to be explained: and so, instead of turning away, as was her first impulse, she stood hesitating.

But Mrs. Harper had already been made acquainted, by Butler, in a few hurried words, with Paul's agency in Dora's acquittal; and she now spoke.

"Go to him, darling. To him we owe it, under God, that Butler has appeared. He loves you as truly as ever."

And, as she spoke, she gently pushed Dora toward Paul, and retired closing the door.

Over that interview of the lovers let us sacredly draw a veil. No eye saw it but that of heaven.

No ears, but those of Dora and Paul, heard the mutual explanations.

As their separation had been the result of circumstances alone, a few words, we may suppose, were sufficient to remove all doubts on either side.

Having arrived at this happy reunion, why should we unnecessarily delay? Dora and Paul were married, though not immediately. They waited until the trial of Butler, who had surrendered himself to justice, was over. As had been expected, he was acquitted, the verdict being "justifiable homicide."

A large and beautiful country-seat, which had long been in Paul's family, was the place where he wished to reside after marriage, but he resolved to wait until Dora had seen the spot, before he positively decided. Her first exclamation, however, on visiting Sidney Forest, for such the estate was called, was a rapturous admiration of it as a place of residence. "Let us live here, dear Paul," she said, "rather than in that cold, great house in town."

And there they did live. And soon Sidney Forest became celebrated, far and near, not less for the refined social circles that congregated there, than for the liberal charity which emanated from it over all the surrounding region. It was, indeed, as Mrs. Harper said, in her Scriptural language, "like a city set upon a hill."

For Paul and Dora, chastened by their many trials, lived, not for this world only, but for one to come, not as mere butterflies of fashion, but as responsible and intelligent beings.

Their house was adorned with pictures, statues, and everything which could gratify, or foster the taste for the beautiful. "We have the wealth that justifies us in these costly decorations," said Paul, to one who took him to task for indulging in them, "and, unless such as we patronize art, how is it to be supported? And, without art, where is civilization? To cultivate the love for the beautiful, is a duty as well as a pleasure. Heaven, we are told, is all beauty. Let us, therefore, begin here to acquire those qualities,

which will be a part of our nature there. When Christian civilization becomes more perfected, as it gradually will, the enjoyment of these treasures of art will not be confined to the rich, but the poor will share in them, through the medium of public galleries free to all, if indeed any poor shall be left in that day."

The elegant utility which distinguished their house ran, like a silver thread, through their whole life. Their large income was spent chiefly in doing good, but they were not content with charity in money alone. "A kind word or appropriate advice is often," said Paul, "more acceptable than gold. The truest beneficence is that which treats the poverty-struck, the suffering, and even the vicious as brothers of one blood with ourselves. We, who are rich, are but stewards for those who are not; and, in no respect, better than they, but only held to a stricter account. They are being tempted in want and suffering; we by Mammon. Life is a probation to us both. Everything earthly is fleeting: our hopes are not here: it is for another world that we are all preparing. And as the glory and loveliness of this world is but a type of that of heaven, so the best human deeds are but faint shadows of the moral excellence of Paradise. Under God I wish so to live that, after death, I shall not mourn my wasted wealth."

One stormy afternoon in winter, as Paul and his wife sat before a blazing coal fire, a ring was heard at the door and a letter brought in. It was written on soiled paper, clumsily folded, and sealed with a red wafer impressed with a thimble.

"How did this come?" said Dora, as she took the note from the salver.

"It was left at the Park gate, by the stage-driver," replied the servant.

Dora opened it, and had read but a few words, when she dropped it with a slight scream. Paul looked up from his book inquiringly.

"It is from that poor, misguided girl, Susan, of whom I have often told you," said Dora, "I have searched for her in vain for years. She writes incoherently, evidently in sore distress, perhaps dying." And, as she spoke, she extended the letter to Paul.

He read it through, and then said,

"She wishes to see you, to-night; did you notice that?"

"No," replied Dora, rising and coming up to him, where, looking over his shoulder, she read the passage he alluded to. "I had not got that far down the page."

"It is a terrible day, and will be a worse night: yet, if you think you ought to go, I will accompany you."

"Oh! I must go. Don't you think so. Poor, poor Susan."

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"I do."

"Then we will order the carriage to be ready as soon as dinner is over. She fixes seven o'clock as the hour. We will not wait for the dessert, to-day, lest we should be too late."

"And I will make James drive. Old John is too much in years to be out on such a night: it would be cruel to expose his rheumatic limbs to the storm."

Accordingly a little after five o'clock, the carriage was at the door, and Dora, muffled in furs, and escorted by her husband, stepped in, when the coach noiselessly rolled away over the deep snow, vanishing into the tempest like a shadow, or a dream. Dora felt chilled, even under her warm cloak, when the last ruddy glimpse of the drawing-room windows faded away, and nothing was left visible, but the fast falling snow-flakes all around. Involuntarily she nestled closer to her husband's side.

"Alas," he said, divining her thoughts, "alas for those who have no shelter, on an evening like this." And, looking out, he repeated,

*"Poor, naked wretches, whoso'er ye are
That bide the pelting of the pitiless storm,
How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,
Your looped and widowed raggedness, defend ye
From seasons such as these."*

"Shakspeare is always grand," he continued, "after Holy Writ there is nothing grander."

The direction, in the letter, led them to one of the poorest quarters of the city. Rows of decayed houses appeared on either hand, some with tottering window shutters, others with broken panes of glass in which rags were stuffed. At the corners were seen miserable shops, lit by coarse tallow candles, where groceries, coals and other necessities were retailed at enormous prices. But these places were now deserted. The streets, too, were empty. Silence reigned everywhere, except when the wind whistled in sudden gusts, or some loose shutter banged to and fro.

At last the carriage turned down a narrow street, just wide enough for it to pass, and finally halted before a low two-story house, built of wood, and apparently ready to tumble down from age. Dora and her husband seemed to have been expected, for the door was opened before they could knock. Paul carried Dora, in his arms, from the carriage to the house, and then, desiring the coachman to wait, followed her up the rickety and crooked staircase.

The room into which they were ushered was a narrow apartment, repulsive to the last degree. The plaster had fallen in many places from the walls; the floor had sunk at one side away; there was no fire-place; and several of the window panes were broken. A solitary table, of unpainted pine; two chairs of the commonest description; and a

truckle bed, covered with a woman's cloak, shabby beyond imagination, constituted the furniture. A single tallow candle, burning in a rusty iron candlestick, and emitting a rancid, fatty smell, threw a dull glare around the chamber.

By this faint light Dora perceived a ghastly face, illumined by two eyes of supernatural size and brightness, looking out from under the stained and tattered cloak. Wan and wasted as that countenance was, she recognized it instantly as that of Susan.

The invalid strove to sit up, as Dora approached, while the old woman, who had opened the door, hastened to place a chair. Dora took the chair, but made a gesture to Susan to lie still.

"Why have you never sent for me before?" she said, affectionately, sitting down and taking the invalid's hand, which the latter feebly extended from under the bed-clothes. "Oh! Susan, was this kind of you?"

The only answer of the invalid was a burst of tears. She had long hesitated to send for Dora, fearing that the latter, notwithstanding her goodness of heart, would turn from one so vile. She could not, for awhile, speak; she could only press Dora's hand.

"I am so fallen," she said, at last, brokenly, "yet you visit me, you pity me. You are an angel. Oh! had I been half as good as you——"

She would have continued, but a violent fit of coughing interrupted her.

Dora gazed at her with painful emotion. Susan was evidently in the last stage of consumption, and seemed to suffer, at times, intensely. But it was less her physical pain than her mental condition which affected her visitor.

Perhaps Susan read her old companion's thoughts, for, seeing Dora's eyes fixed on her, she said, when her coughing was past. "You see I shall not trouble any one long. I am not twenty-five, yet am dying."

"What minister has visited you?" said Dora.

The invalid half raised herself in bed, leaning on her elbow, and fastening her eyes on the inquirer, she answered, in shrill intonations,

"Do you think ministers would come here? Oh! no, not they," and she laughed scornfully. "It's only the rich that they seek out. They'd never run the risk of infection, or soil their dainty gloves, by coming into these miserable streets, where fever and filth fight, by turns, for the mastery. There was a Catholic priest along here, awhile ago; and once a Methodist preacher called; but I didn't expect to die then." She had been speaking with a passion and energy unusual to her; and now she stopped suddenly, grasped Dora's arm, and eagerly scanning her face, said, after a pause. "Do you think I'll die?"

Dora could not answer her. Susan's dread of

death was so apparent, yet her state of mind so unfit for the awful change, that her visitor hesitated between pity and duty. At last Dora said,

"You had better let us send for a minister, Susan. You do injustice to them, in thinking they will not come to you. Mr. Sidney knows more than one, who, even on such a night as this, will visit you." And, turning to Paul, who had stood a silent spectator of this scene, she gave him a look, at which he immediately left the room. The moment after the muffled sound of the carriage, rolling away from the door, was heard.

"Susan," said Dora, "why did you not tell us you were ill? You want many comforts, I fear, which we would cheerfully have given you. You are too ill now to be moved, but everything that can be done for you here, shall be."

"And you would have come to see me," said Susan, eagerly, not noticing these last words, "you would have come even before I was dying. You, rich, loved and happy, you, you would have come. You would not have turned away from me, as from something too vile even to look at."

She had caught Dora's hand in hers, and was holding it tightly, eagerly looking into her visitor's face, as if to read her soul.

"No, I would not have shunned you," soothingly replied Dora. "We are all erring: none can afford to pass by on the other side. I should have come to you, dear Susan, and reasoned with you, as in the old days, when we lived at Mrs. Harper's."

"Ah, those were happy days," said Susan. "Would I had never known others!" And she clasped her hands over her face, as if to shut out some hateful vision.

All at once, however, she let fall her hands, and with that wild, eager look, gazed at Dora. She seemed to be making an effort to speak.

"You once told me," she said, at last, firmly, "that the wages of sin were death; and here I am, an example of the truth of the warning. Oh! I have been wicked, but I have suffered too. I thought, when I listened to Mr. Thomaston, that I should have an easy life of it; and, in truth, I was never happier than for awhile; I had beautiful dresses, an elegant room, and nothing to do. I went to the theatre, I rode out in the afternoons. I thought of you all with pity. I looked at my fingers, no longer pricked with the needle, and remembering how we used often to sew late into the night, I laughed at my own folly and yours. I compared the luxurious dishes on which I fed, with the plain, and often coarse fare at Mrs. Harper's. But this did not last long. Mr. Thomaston began to be cross to me; often left me without money; and finally hinted that he had grown tired of me. As I never loved him, and as my vanity

alone led to my fall, I should not have cared for his neglect, if he had given me plenty of money. Things were in this state when he was killed. That made me penniless——”

Here another fit of coughing, brought on by the violence of her emotion, supervened; and it was sometime before she could resume. When she began again, the perspiration stood in huge drops on her forehead, and she spoke with evidently shortened breath.

“I can’t go on,” she said, “at least I can’t tell you all.” She no longer looked at Dora, but with eyes fixed immoveably on the bed, proceeded. “I soon found for what I had sacrificed virtue, peace, and a good name. To sew for a living is hard, but to sin for it is harder. It is better to starve, to slave day and night, even to die of hunger and exhaustion, than to seek a livelihood in the way I was seeking it. Often I was without a home, and even without food for days. Then would come times when I lived well again and had fine dresses. But soon things changed once more. Thus I went on, but gradually faring worse, until finally, for nights on nights, I have walked the streets almost starving, and have purchased, with the few cents left me, a place to sleep in, at a miserable lodging-house. Many a time a dram has been my only supper; for we can’t live that life without our drams: it would drive us crazy else. And thus, step by step, I have come to this. Oh!” she cried, turning to Dora, and clasping her hands, “if I had listened to Mrs. Harper, if I had only imitated you, I might now have been well, I might have lived for years, I might have got something to do, through your aid, better than sewing for the shops. But now I must die. You don’t know how terrible it is to die,” she cried, wildly. “To be nailed down in a coffin and buried in the damp ground, with nothing to keep the wet out, on a night like this,” and she glared, like one insane, at the window. “Can’t you save me; won’t you,” she cried, clutching Dora around the neck, “I can’t die, I can’t, I can’t——”

She could speak no more, for a fit of coughing, brought on by her agitation, racked her exhausted frame, for a third time, until Dora began to fear that life would part in the struggle. The thought was dreadful. The condition of Susan’s mind shocked and horrified her visitor.

“Oh! if she should die,” the latter reflected, as she supported Susan, “in this awful state of terror and impotence. Father in heaven,” she murmured, raising her eyes above, “spare her, spare her, till she can learn submission and faith.”

That tearful petition was not unheeded. Susan survived the crisis, and even seemed more composed, both physically and mentally. Dora seized the opportunity to speak to her soothingly, by

directing her attention to those passages of Scripture, in which mercy is the prevailing theme. She talked to the dying girl of the Magdalene, whom, while others reviled her, the Saviour had told “to go and sin no more.” She reminded her of the thief on the cross. “It is not the righteous, but sinners,” she said, “whom the blessed Jesus came to call to repentance: remember that, dear Susan.”

While thus occupied, her hearer’s frame of mind gradually becoming more peaceful, the carriage was heard again moving, almost noiselessly, along the snow-covered street, and immediately after an eminent divine, accompanied by Paul, entered the room. The Rev. Dr. —— was well in years, and beginning to be feeble, but, at the summons of his visitor, he had not hesitated to leave his warm fire, and brave the tempest, in order to bear his Master’s mission to this perishing soul.

Many hours he remained in that miserable chamber; and with him Dora and her husband. Morning, indeed, was dawning when they left. The storm was over, and the temperature milder, but these things they scarcely knew, for, as they gazed together on the face of the dead, deeper and more engrossing thoughts were in their hearts.

The minister at last broke the silence.

“Her countenance is composed and sweet,” he said. “We know that her last moments were full of hope, and we will trust that she was not deceived. God is merciful above all things. The world dealt hardly with her, in life, so that, in death, she has, perhaps, found acceptance. Oh! if her sex had less injustice at the hands of man, we should see but few of these agonized deathbeds. In the Great Day of accounts, it will not be the poor Magdalene, who was starved into sin by social wrong, that will receive the heaviest penalty, but the Mammon worshipper who drove her to despair, and the profligate who hunted her to her ruin.”

As he spoke these words, he reverently drew the sheet over the face of the dead, and silently led the way from the room.

No pauper hearse bore Susan to her last home, no Potter’s Field received her remains. Would that all, who “sin and suffer,” might find friends like her.

Dora and Paul still live, and are happy, though not without trials. Mrs. Harper resides with them as housekeeper, having refused all Dora’s offers of a home, until she could feel independent, by having some fixed employment. “I never begged my bread yet,” she said, “and I won’t live on charity, even at your hands, my darling, while I can work.”

Butler has made for himself a name, as an artist of grand conception and original style.

He imitates Nature, not the schools, and in this adheres to the determination of his earlier days.

A few years ago, during a visit to England, Paul and Dora met the Lady Alicia. She had sunk into an old maid, principally known for back-biting her acquaintance, and practising the formalities of religion, regardless of its spirit.

And now, reader, farewell! Our story has not been written without a purpose. If it succeeds in directing attention toward the wrongs of woman, if it enables even one orphan to bear up against life's trials, we shall be amply repaid.

*It is not by yielding to temptation that we conquer:
it is by struggling to the end.*

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FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

BY ELLA RODMAN.

"EVERYTHING," said somebody, with a positive air, "depends upon a first impression."

"I am not so sure of that," observed Mr. Darmidge, a gentlemanly-looking man of middle age, "indeed I can afford most indisputable evidence to the contrary; that is," he continued, "if you are chattering away, as usual, upon the subjects of love and marriage."

The knot of young girls whom he had approached vehemently denied the imputation; but the rather disconcerted appearance of the animated speaker rendered the supposition more probable than otherwise. However, they were a pleasant and numerous family party of relatives to the fiftieth degree removed; and comforting themselves with the knowledge that "nobody minded Cousin Darmidge," they defended their own theory in the most energetic manner; until, having at length exhausted their own powers of eloquence, they laughingly challenged him to bring forward his proofs to the contrary.

"Well, then," said he, with a mischievous glance at his wife, an elegant-looking woman, considerably his junior, "I will give you, for an illustration, the melancholy history of my own courtship."

"Do! do!" they all exclaimed, "the idea of Cousin Darmidge in love is perfectly delightful!"

"Really, Mr. Darmidge," observed his lady, with something of a frown on her pleasant face, "I beg that you will not manufacture any nonsense for the sake of a story."

"No, madam," he replied, with a profound bow, "there is unfortunately, in what I am about to relate, nonsense enough already manufactured; which quite precludes the necessity of drawing on the imagination for a fresh supply."

They all stood somewhat in awe of the elegant Mrs. Darmidge, and were now on the *qui vive* for the promised story.

"To begin then," said he, "at the beginning—which is, I suppose, as convenient a place as any—you must know that after I had been 'crossed in love' some dozen times or so, by various fickle charms, and had accumulated piles of love-letters—which, to tell the truth, were chiefly copies of my own—and hair enough, of different shades, to fill a moderate sized pincushion, I began to get over my youthful folly; and regarding these successive attacks as a sort of ordeal incidental to youth, and of the same nature as the scarlet-fever,

whooping-cough, and other troubles of childhood, I resolved to give up a foolish kind of theory I had indulged in, about there being a something, called a heart, somewhere beneath my waistcoat, and make a goose of myself no longer. By-and-bye I began to get what you saucy 'just-come-outs' term 'elderly,' and was set down as a regularly confirmed old bachelor. Young ladies were my particular aversion; and when any friend came to be congratulated upon his approaching marriage, I always wished him happiness with a kind of sardonic smile—the wish seeming equivalent to seeing a man walking through red-hot coals, and 'hoping that he wouldn't hurt himself.'

"At length, however, when I thought that there was no longer a possible chance of a second edition of my former folly: when I had quite worked myself up to the idea that I was one of the most sensible men who had ever illuminated a darkened age, I began to deliberate upon the advantages and disadvantages of matrimony. You need not smile, young ladies, and look so very much delighted; I had not the most distant idea of 'falling in love.' No, I began to think that perhaps it might be pleasant to have some one to sit at the table and talk to me when I came home, get my slippers ready, and nurse me when I was sick. But I intended to look for some steady, elderly kind of a lady, who would not expect any of these attentions herself."

Here he was interrupted by the indignation of the younger members of the company; but his wife was perfectly calm and placid, wearing a look which seemed to say, "you may *talk* as you please, but I can *act*." When they allowed him to proceed, he continued mournfully:

"Alas! in spite of this fortification of excellent good sense, never was an unfortunate man so taken in and done for. I was completely deceived; and this will show you the value of first impressions. It was a bleak, unpromising kind of a day in the early part of autumn; and rather out of humor with myself, and the rest of the world, and wearied with a long journey, I took my seat in the cars—looking forward with no great pleasure to going home, I amused myself as I glanced at those about me by picturing their return, welcomed by voices that gladdened at their approach, I looked rather angrily toward them as two ladies, who appeared to be mother and daughter, seated themselves just opposite; but my eyes, I suppose

from having nothing else to employ them, seemed constantly drawn in that direction—though when the younger lady happened to glance back, I assumed an angry scowl, and pretended to be occupied with my paper. But, nevertheless, I fell to musing on the possibility of having at length met with my beau ideal. Although rather younger and better-looking than I could have wished, she looked serious and steady; and her whole appearance was so lady-like, and yet just what I wanted, that I felt half inclined to write a proposal on the margin of the newspaper and fling it over to her.

"At the hotel where I stopped, both mother and daughter stopped too; and as I had been troubled all through the night by a vision of the unknown lady presiding over my establishment, I resolved to procure an introduction through a mutual friend. 'It must have been Mrs. Somers and her daughter,' said he, when I had described them, 'but I should think, from your description, that you had fallen in love with the *old* lady, instead of the young one.' They were not visible at the tea-table, nor did I see them until the next morning; fatigue having caused them to keep their apartments.

"There was quite a large party at the hotel, given in honor of some illustrious stranger; and as an elegant-looking young lady rose from the piano, my friend led me up and presented me to Miss Somers. I was perfectly astonished; I could scarcely recognize my fellow traveller of the preceding day—she appeared at least ten years younger; her eyes were sparkling with excitement, and in short, instead of the sober wife-elect I had pictured, I beheld a beautiful young lady, who looked perfectly competent to torment any old bachelor's life out. I scarcely knew what to say—I had not conversed with a young lady for twenty years; but notwithstanding all my prejudices, there was something about Miss Somers that attracted me in spite of myself. I tried in vain to arm myself with all my strength of mind—a single look or tone put all to flight; in one week I was her devoted slave—in a month I had laid myself, my fortune, and my prejudices at the feet of Augusta Somers—and in the course of a year I beheld that lady transformed into Mrs. Darmidge. In less than a week after our marriage, I was running up stairs for my wife's shawl; and she has played the tyrant ever since."

All agreed that he had been served exactly right; and Mrs. Darmidge said, with a smile:

"Since he has been foolish enough to publish this silly story, I may as well solve the mystery of my wonderful transformation. I had been travelling for a week with scarcely any rest—I had a violent headache and cold in my head, which is by no means a beautifier—and added to this I felt cross, which is very apt to show

itself in my countenance. I had never seen Mr. Darmidge before, although I had often heard him spoken of as a very wealthy, eccentric old bachelor—but generous and noble-hearted, always ready to relieve the distressed—until I had worked up quite a little romance about him in my own mind, and felt very anxious to see him. His age was rather a recommendation; I had always wanted some one to look up to—some noble, dignified character, whom I could reverence as well as love; and I doubt if he ever had a warmer admirer than I was before I knew him. The cross-looking, elderly gentleman in the cars amused me very much; and had any one then said to me, 'behold your future husband,' I should have laughed the idea to scorn. When the introduction took place, my surprise and disappointment quite equalled his; the old ogre then who had been frowning at me during the whole journey was Mr. Darmidge—*my ideal of perfection!* I was so provoked that I resolved to make a conquest of him, just to punish him for being so different from what I had expected; but when he began to talk, I found him so pleasant that I became interested in spite of myself; and then he was so constantly doing something good and generous, which always came to my ears, that I began to thaw by degrees—and when I really had made the projected conquest, I found that I had by no means come off unscathed."

"Just like the ballad of 'Johnny Sands,'" said Mr. Darmidge, "you wanted to push me into the water, and fell in yourself—or rather, we both fell in together."

"Pho," said Mr. Bettlehouse, an eminent lawyer, always ready for a frolic, "as the boys say, 'I can beat that.' Now in my case——"

"Now, Mr. Bettlehouse," remonstrated his wife, a pretty, lively little creature, who seemed to have scarcely emerged from girlhood, "do not tell that nonsense, I beseech of you; only think how I shall blush."

"I shall tell it on purpose to expose you," replied her husband, "a most villainous plot was concocted against me; and I was fairly carried off, and married by force. I had the pleasure of overhearing the whole scheme beforehand; and like a great fool, I rushed into the snare with my eyes open. My story may serve as a warning to others."

"Remember, though, that it is *only* a story," interrupted his wife, "a shameful fabrication, entirely of his own manufacture."

Little Mrs. Bettlehouse laughingly ensconced herself behind the substantial figure of a portly aunt, in pretended modesty; and her husband proceeded with his narration:

"You remember," said he, "the favorite question in the fortune-tellers, 'where will you meet

your intended?" there appears now to be a decided majority in favor of cars and stage-coaches; for it was in one of the latter vehicles that I first beheld my evil genius."

Here Mrs. Brettlehouse, looking out from her screen, shook her hand in a threatening manner; but the gentleman proceeded with unmoved dignity:

"I was travelling in the stage from Albany to Troy—having remained all night at the former place, where I had been very much interested in the case of a poor family, for whom I had endeavored to procure a pension; but as I succeeded, I did not regret the night's rest of which it had deprived me—although a glance in the mirror previous to starting would have been sufficient to eradicate any amount of personal vanity. It was pretty cold weather; and muffling myself in a large cloak, and pulling my hat well over my ears, I threw myself back in the solitary vehicle, and entered upon my homeward journey.

"For some miles I enjoyed the charms of solitude; but before I had quite decided whether a fellow traveller would be agreeable or otherwise, the stage drew up at a white house, and from the quantity of hand-boxes and other baggage, among which my one little valise seemed in danger of being smothered, I concluded that a lady would soon be forthcoming. Nor was I mistaken; a young lady, who appeared to have been wrapped in everything that was handy, came down the walk, accompanied by an elderly lady, who was evidently her maiden aunt.

"Now take good care of yourself, my dear," said the aunt, "and keep the brick to your feet, and do not have the windows open. Driver," she continued, "are there any other passengers?"

"Only one gentleman, ma'am."

"Then you must come with me, aunt," exclaimed the young lady, laughing, "for I positively cannot think of travelling alone with a gentleman."

"Oh, he's an oldish kind of a one, miss," said the man, "he seems very quiet."

"Well," thought I, "this is pleasant;" for when a man verges on forty he is apt to be rather touchy about his age; so evacuating the back seat for the benefit of the lady, I placed myself on the furthest one opposite, and pulling my hat still further over my eyes, resolved to perform the grave, elderly gentleman to perfection. My fellow traveller entered the vehicle with a spring in spite of her mufflings; and having settled herself to her satisfaction, the stage proceeded at its usual pace, and I had leisure to examine the face of my vis-a-vis. A more mischievous-looking monkey I never beheld—see frontispiece, as the picture-books say; her round, gipsy face beamed with merriment, and her eyes seemed ready to

dance themselves out of her head. I could see, even at the first glance, that she was a complete flirt; and having looked toward the corner where I sat, probably in the forlorn hope of seeing something in a hat and coat worth practising upon, she gave a desponding sigh, and undutifully discarding the warm brick provided by her careful aunt, she drew forth a letter from her pocket, and was soon buried in its contents. The closely written pages, erased and recrossed, proclaimed it to be a confidential epistle from some female friend; and wishing vehemently for the ghost of Mr. Burchell to utter such a 'fudge!' as none but he could utter, I watched her with rapidly kindling ire while she complacently perused each line. That finished, she began to bite her nails for further occupation, which raised in me a most ardent desire to box her ears. 'Not much like falling in love,' you will say; but, nevertheless, I began to feel certain twinges about the region of the heart, as I gazed on the bright face before me, while she, saucy minx! appeared to regard me as a part of the vehicle. But my time was coming.

"At a hotel where the stage stopped for a few moments, the young lady met a whole wagon full of girl acquaintances, whose surprise at seeing her appeared unbounded.

"Why, Marion Connor!" they exclaimed, "what are you doing here? What in the name of all that's wonderful, has brought you in this direction?"

"I have business here," she replied, with a laughing attempt at importance, "I suppose you could not guess it?"

"The only business I ever knew you to be engaged in was an attack upon the heart of some poor, unfortunate man," rejoined one of the bevy.

"That is just it exactly," said Marion, with a merry laugh.

"So then," thought I, "she makes a regular business of it, does she?"

"You must know, girls," she continued, with an appearance of great solemnity, "that I have concluded to settle down soberly at last. I am going to Troy on purpose to set my cap for the rich old lawyer, Sam Brettlehouse, and I give you all an invitation to come and see me when I am married."

"Do hear her," said one of them, "she speaks as though she was quite sure of him—how do you know that he will have you?"

"Have me, indeed!" she repeated, "of course he will be perfectly delighted at the idea. No fear of his not having me—the only thing is he may be too bashful to imagine that so much happiness can be intended for him. But one thing I know; I am determined to have him at any rate."

"Well," thought I, "if this impudence isn't

really too much? Here I am, actually disposed of before my very face, without being allowed to have a voice in the matter!" I had a great mind to come forth from my obscurity and say, 'the old lawyer thanks you for your flattering intentions, madam, but begs to decline the honor you would confer upon him;' but then as I glanced at the young witch, I wondered if I did wish to decline it? So I wisely concluded to say nothing, and listened to their chattering as unmoved as though I had never heard of such a person as Sam Bettlehouse.

"We drove on; and determined to get up some sort of a conversation, I asked my companion if she found an open window near her too cold. The inquiry was made in such a gruff voice that at first she gave a visible start; but this was succeeded by such a sweet smile that I felt almost conquered. During the remainder of the ride I was under the uneasy conviction that some kind of a spell was woven around me—mysterious toils from which I could not escape. Favored by the obscurity of my corner, I sat gazing at my companion, trying in vain to persuade myself that this girlish nonsense was bold and unbecoming. Then, as I remembered the visage I had encountered in the mirror, I began to fear that when she beheld the object of these laughing designs, she would change her mind. That she should see me after her arrival, and that very soon, I had fully determined, for I felt interested to know how she would proceed; but in what manner I should appear before her puzzled me considerably. At length I had hit upon a scheme. I thought it most probable that she would not recognize me upon a second meeting, as she had scarcely taken the trouble to look at me; besides, brushed up and improved I should be quite a different individual, and I determined to feign entire ignorance, just to see how the adventure would turn out.

"Miss Connor was deposited at the house of a relative with whom I was acquainted; and keeping my journey in the stage-coach a profound secret, I waited for the finale. I heard that the young lady spoke of having travelled with an old bear, who growled at her once, and then relapsed into silence. I tried in vain to feel angry at this uncomplimentary speech; and on receiving an invitation for an evening party, where I knew that I should meet Miss Connor, I was so fidgetty about my dress, that I almost blushed for the dignity of my office. I endeavored to persuade myself that grey hairs were honorable, and called to mind all the instances I had heard of persons turning grey at a very early age; but people, I knew, could not be thus deluded in my case; and notwithstanding all my philosophy, I continued mercilessly pulling out hair after hair, until my eyes being suddenly opened to the alarming

scantiness of my head-covering, I found that, unless I preferred being bald, it would be wiser to desist from my employment.

"I saw Miss Connor looking more beautiful and mischievous than ever; and when we were introduced, I armed myself with a look in which were mingled pleasure at the acquaintance, and the most stubborn conviction of never having seen her before. When my name was mentioned she started, and colored violently, and seemed anxious to escape somewhere; but I stood smiling in the most perfect unconsciousness, and glancing at me half-suspiciously with a somewhat puzzled air, she seemed quite at a loss what to do. A deep blush, probably called up by the remembrance of that conversation in the stage, burned constantly on her cheek; making her look so perfectly lovely that I would not for worlds have discovered myself. I could not help smiling, when, determined not to rest without being quite certain, she said, with an extremely penetrating look,

"'I cannot divest myself of the idea that I have seen you somewhere before, Mr. Bettlehouse—the resemblance is very strong.'

"'It must be a mistake,' I replied, 'for I should certainly remember *you*. But I am the most unfortunate man in that respect,' I continued, 'for I have such an accommodating face that I am allowed no identity of my own; being constantly mistaken for some other person. Even in childhood, I offended all our aristocratic relations by looking so provokingly like every one else; and since my arrival at the years of discretion, I do assure you that I came very near being implicated in a breach of promise, on account of my unlucky phiz.'

"This was scrupulously true, for I really have been tormented in that way as never man was tormented before; and Miss Connor, seeming very much relieved, listened in great amusement to a long account of my calamities, which I told on purpose to drive away her suspicions. But I noticed that, notwithstanding my endeavors, she seemed to be on her guard; and there was not the least appearance of setting her cap. 'Perhaps,' thought I, 'she may consider me an old dandy,' as I glanced uneasily at my diamond pin and blue cravat, and wished that I had not discarded my usual black one.

"Miss Connor persisted in treating me with the greatest coolness; at church she never would look toward me—never appeared to see me if I walked beside her—and turned all my complimentary speeches into ridicule. She almost plagued my life out; and I believe that this was the very reason why I thought so much of her. At length I could stand this no longer; and when I had mustered up courage to tell her so, she

pretended to be very much surprised—said something about considering me as a friend—and acted like such a witch that I was half wild. Didn't I have my revenge afterward, when I let out my secret?

"Then you really love me," said she, "no matter how I act?"

"I said something rather extravagant about being supremely happy, even if she chose to amuse herself by beating me with the poker; and finding me so accommodating she at length relented.

"My dear," said I, the morning after we were married, "have you any recollection of an old bear with whom you once rode in the stage?"

"The spring with which the ci-devant Miss Connor started from the sofa was only equalled by the look that accompanied it. She seemed almost ready to eat me.

"Don't you think he looked very much like me?" I continued, tantalizingly, "you told me so once."

"You good-for-nothing, horrid fellow!" she exclaimed, "how could I have been so taken in! I have done the very thing which I thought nothing could have tempted me to do. As I looked at that old witch in the stage, I wondered if he ever could be foolish enough to have any thoughts of getting married—I was persuaded that not even the wealth of Croesus could tempt me to have him!"

"Taken in indeed!" said I, laughing, "I think I am the one who has been *taken in*."

"But there was now such a perfect explosion of grief, wounded modesty, and alarming hysterics, that, for the sake of peace, I was obliged to say that I did not believe she had any thoughts of such a thing—though, to this day, I believe that she had."

"Ladies and gentlemen," said little Mrs. Bettlehouse, "all that he has been telling you is a complete story, and he knows it; but even were it true, he needn't brag of what he is so very thankful for. He is the most troublesome man that ever lived; he follows me about so that I am tired of the very sight of him."

Mr. Bettlehouse, to show his independence, began playing the agreeable to a young lady; but a general laugh was raised against him, when, from the force of habit, he gradually advanced to the sofa, and seated himself in his usual place beside his wife.

"Come, Mr. Groveswood," exclaimed several merry voices, as a pale, intellectual-looking man entered, "we are all telling our 'experience,' and as we have already had 'two old men's tales,' we expect you to furnish something quite romantic."

The new-comer was very handsome and elegant in appearance; and in spite of ill-health, which

had cast an air of languor and suffering over his expressive features, a sweet smile played around his mouth; and all the young ladies candidly acknowledged themselves in love with him—they pronounced him "so very interesting."

"As to romance," he replied, "I am afraid that I have done with that now—thirty-five is such a very matter-of-fact age. I believe though that this lady still confesses to that weakness: if I am not mistaken, she fell in love with me because she chose to imagine that my name was 'Ernest'—but when she found that I was really plain, unromantic 'Daniel,' she had serious thoughts of changing her mind. It is quite wonderful now how she contrives to avoid calling me by my right name; generally, it is 'Mr. Groveswood'—sometimes 'you'—and when very amiably disposed, 'my love'—but I do not think she has ever called me 'Daniel.'"

"You were always 'Ernest' to me," said his wife, to whom a three years' marriage had only unfolded fresh traits for love and respect in the husband of her choice, "but must I tell that very silly story? The folly, you know, was all on my side."

Mrs. Groveswood, although not generally called even pretty, had a slight, elegant figure, and a face that lighted up at times into an expression of intense beauty. It was an enthusiastic face—there was nothing tame or quiet about it; and while an over-sensitiveness of feeling called the tears to her eyes on the slightest occasion, a keen perception of the ludicrous often dimpled her mouth with irrepressible merriment. All were determined to have the story, and after vain entreaties to be excused, Mrs. Groveswood resigned herself to her fate.

"I think," said she, "that from the time when I began to think at all, I have lived in a kind of dream with my eyes open. I have been all my life deceived and undeceived, but to have the same thing repeated over again. I never enjoyed realities, because I lived in an ideal world; and not even ridicule, that damper of all sentiment, has quite cured me of my unfortunate predilection. I always identified myself with the heroine of any favorite book, and as such was supremely happy. I knew very well that I was not beautiful, and but little of my time was spent before the glass, for that destroyed the illusion; but lulled into forgetfulness of realities by some exciting novel. What a blissful life I lived! What noble, elevated love was mine! Never lady of the olden time had such devotees at her shrine as those whom my fancy conjured up; never were noble deeds so abundant, and every-day characters so uncommon as in the Utopia where I reigned supreme.

"But not satisfied with this, I generally

embellished persons whom I met with those qualities, which alone, as I imagined, constituted perfection. At church I often distributed the characters in the 'Children of the Abbey,' and other favorite works among the different members of the congregation; and for several successive Sundays I worshipped an imaginary 'Amanda'—until one day, chancing to walk behind her, as she promenaded with an acquaintance, leading a cross child by the hand, I overheard her saying, 'sugar has risen dreadfully, and the price of coal is really enormous.' She was immediately discarded from the cherished volume, and a worthier 'Amanda' supplied her place.

"On another occasion, a gentleman whom I had hitherto considered rather common-place, happening to say in answer to a question, 'I am too rheumatic to do so and so,' my ever ready fancy converted it into 'I am too romantic;' and conquering my natural bashfulness, I exclaimed without a moment's thought, 'oh, I am so glad to find some one who confesses to a little romance! I began to despair of ever meeting with such a person.' My new subject was certainly a matter-of-fact an individual as I could have selected; for after gazing at me as though he somewhat doubted my sanity, in the most business-like manner he requested a definition of romantic. 'Do you mean,' said he, 'some one who spends his nights in star-gazing, and his days in writing poetry? If so, you have very much mistaken me.' I warmly denied such an imputation, and endeavored to define my meaning as something noble and lofty; but during my rather unsatisfactory explanation, I became painfully conscious that the term 'romantic' was something to be imagined rather than described. I sat with burning cheeks after this ridiculous expose, with the pleasant conviction that the others were enjoying a laugh at my expense.

"At sixteen I was most hopelessly in love with an ideal, manufactured after the following receipt: equal quantities of William Wallace, Sir Walter Scott, General Washington and Lafayette, with half an ounce of Byron, and an immense quantity of imaginary qualities supplied by myself. And yet even this constellation of virtues alone would not have been sufficient; the unknown idol must also possess a claim on my sympathy. I felt that I could not love one who was in full possession of all his faculties, like the common herd; he must be unfortunate in some way—delicate in health—just sufficiently ill perhaps to require some one to bathe his forehead with cologne, and sit and hold his hand, or read to him. I never reflected how illy calculated I was for the office of nurse.

"At length I seemed destined to meet with my beau ideal. A matter-of-fact relative who had

often ridiculed my fancies, told me that she had discovered a hero every way worthy to fill the vacant place in my visions of romance. 'He is an old bachelor,' said she, 'over thirty, delicate in health, fastidious in his taste, and in short, everything that you admire—except that he is wealthy.' This was to me a very great objection—he must be unfortunate in every way; but I made the minutest inquiries respecting him, until Mr. Groveswood, as he ought to have been, stood exactly pictured in my mind. My uncle, who, being a complete Tom Thumb himself, imagined every one a giant who towered even an inch above him, represented the newly-discovered hero tall enough even to suit my extended views; and this, with a pair of dark, deep, earnest eyes, lofty brow, and raven locks, with perhaps here and there a silver thread, formed a picture that exactly realized my beau ideal. I was not vain, and I did not once think of a return; I poured forth the whole treasure of my love upon the idol whom I had created, and thought of nothing farther. I half dreaded to behold the original—fearful of seeing my dreams dispelled; but then too I wished to see one whom I had endowed with all the virtues which should have been distributed among the rest of the human race. But time passed on, and I saw him not; the fates seemed to have interfered to prevent a meeting. Whenever I went there, Mr. Groveswood had just gone, and I could not even obtain a glimpse of him.

"It was a warm day in July; and at my uncle's country-seat, where I was on a visit, we scarcely knew what to do with ourselves. The 'we,' in this case, means my aunt, and a fashionable widow, who appeared to be established there as a guest for an indefinite time; as for me, with a book within reach I never felt ennui. I disliked any visitors, but this Mrs. Medway was my particular dread; for she did not cease to laugh at me from morning till night. She christened me 'Miss Innocence,' because, to tell the truth, I was often shocked at the style of conversation which took place between fashionable ladies, half of which I could not understand, but what I did often sent me ashamed from the room. Although verging on forty, she by no means resigned all claims to admiration; and by dressing in a youthful manner, she appeared much younger than she really was.

"On the day in question, she had retired to her apartment for a siesta—I was seated in a shady corner of the front piazza, buried in a book—and my aunt occupied the settee, on which she had reclined at full length. There was a noise of carriage-wheels, and a vehicle stopping at the gate; I looked up with a sigh, but seeing only a cross-looking gentleman, and two strange ladies, who refused to come in, I resumed my book. My

aunt, after talking to them for some time, turned to me, and asked me to go and call Mrs. Medway. I entered the darkened apartment, whose occupant was enjoying a comfortable nap, (her chief enjoyment, by the way, in the absence of visitors) and roused her from her slumbers with the information that somebody wished to see her. But feeling cross at being disturbed, and not hearing any voices, she concluded that they had gone; and pulled me down beside her, to the imminent hazard of my muslin dress. But before long, a messenger appeared, with the intelligence that Mr. Groveswood was in the parlor.

"Mr. Groveswood! how we both started! I, with acute disappointment, for the face I had seen was not at all the one I had pictured, and Mrs. Medway with the laudable intention of dressing herself to the best advantage. I stood in silent consternation, with my dress tumbled, and my hair disordered; while the widow proceeded with her toilet. At length, having sufficiently adorned herself, she had time to be generous; and shaking out my rumpled dress, she threw an ornament over my neck, and drawing my arm through hers, we proceeded to the parlor.

"I scarcely ventured to look up; but when I did, I found myself close beside the formidable Mr. Groveswood. All my visions were dispelled at the first glance; my hero was not an inch above the middle height—not near as grave and melancholy-looking as I could wish, for he had a very hearty laugh—and besides, he was entirely too youthful in appearance to inspire the least bit of reverence. Were he not listening so attentively, I should say that, disappointed as I felt, I could not help acknowledging to myself that he was very handsome; but men are so notoriously conceited that I withhold the compliment till some other time. I remember that he spoke to me, but I am not sure that I made a reply at all to the purpose; I felt so foolish and bashful—embarrassed by the consciousness of my disordered dress. As I glanced at a young lady near me, a cousin of Mr. Groveswood's, who was properly be-muslined, be-laced, and be-ribboned, and who seemed to feel very comfortable in consequence, as she sat, perfectly at her ease, playing with a handsome fan, I could not help wishing that I had paid a little more attention to my dress, and a little less to my novel. Nature could not have intended me for a heroine; I never could throw on my clothes at random, like the divinities you read of, and yet look perfectly proper and suitable—and my hair, instead of falling around me like a graceful veil, if loosed by exercise, was sure to assume a Madge Wildfire style unless put up with particular care. 'Well,' thought I, 'Mr. Groveswood of course thinks me an awkward, ill-dressed, plain-looking girl; and as I appeared rather

mature for sixteen, I was half persuaded that he considered me an old maid.'

"Before I had quite recovered from my surprise and embarrassment, he was gone; but at parting he made a most gentlemanly bow, intended particularly for me, and quite distinct from the rest—one of those attentions which is carefully treasured up by a girl 'not yet come out.' Mrs. Medway had scarcely been honored with a word; and perhaps it was this circumstance which led her rather to censure, than praise, the unexpected visitor. I was disappointed, and yet interested too; I scarcely knew which predominated. My aunt told us that the carriage had been very nearly upset; and that, when advised to get out, Mr. Groveswood refused to stir until the ladies, a sister and cousin, had been safely deposited on terra firma. It only needed this, and a little bit of Mrs. Medway's ridicule to decide the matter.

"'Noble, lofty conduct!' I exclaimed, in a burst of enthusiasm, 'if I had only been there to stop the horses, and drag him from the carriage!'

"'And been laughed at for your pains,' observed the widow.

"But I heeded her not; my imagination was riding off full chase; I created Mr. Groveswood anew, and before my own creation I worshipped and adored. He had accepted an early invitation to dinner; and during the intervening time I actually tried on all my dresses to select the most becoming—discarded a habit of running out in the sun—and let an interesting novel lie unnoticed, with a book-mark in it.

"The eventful day arrived; and my eyes were opened to the fact that Mrs. Medway was arraying herself with particular care for Mr. Groveswood. I was impressed with a hopeless conviction that unformed sixteen would have but little chance against well-matured forty; but not being quite a fool, I endeavored to persuade the widow to don a cap with pink bows, which was, as I assured her, very becoming. This, thought I, will give her a matronly appearance, and I shall have the advantage of youth at least. But Mrs. Medway smiled pleasantly at my disinterested entreaties, and left the cap in its box. My aunt seemed provokingly determined to assist her with all the aid of her taste and skill; and when, feeling rather jealous, I reproached her for neglecting me to adorn the widow, (for there had been a kind of laughing wager between us to see which would win the day) she replied:

"'But I really believe Mrs. Medway to be in earnest.'

"'How do you know,' said I, with averted face, 'but that I too am in earnest?'

"'Pho, child,' was the reply, as she clasped my bracelet, 'you would scarcely be such a fool

—you are too young for that yet. Mrs. Medway is just the very person for him—she can nurse and take care of him.’

“I could not avoid asking myself if Mr. Groveswood were the person to marry for a nurse? And as to Mrs. Medway’s care, I called to mind various observations which she had made respecting her married life. ‘I had so much philosophy,’ said she, ‘that, after my husband failed, I went to a dinner-party the very day that there was an auction in the house. Mr. Medway, not being very well, remained at home.’ ‘Is it possible!’ I exclaimed, indignantly, ‘and do you call this *philosophy*? A wife’s place, at such a time, was at her husband’s bedside, with her hand clasped in his, listening to his slightest breath.’ ‘There was nothing of the kind to listen to,’ said she, laughing, ‘Mr. Medway did not go to bed—he paced up and down the room.’ I left the room in disgust at such utter heartlessness, and Mrs. Medway considered me more crazy than ever.

“Mr. Groveswood came; but as I scarcely found courage to answer his questions, he turned to the brilliant widow, while I sat in a quiet corner, watching every word he uttered, and wishing in vain for Mrs. Medway’s fluency. ‘This,’ thought I, ‘is my reward; I have defended him constantly against that woman’s ridicule—I have endowed him with the virtues of a god—while she considers him, to use her own term, but as a good speculation—I am wasting my youth in a hopeless dream—’

“Here, to conceal the tears which started to my eyes at this moving picture of my own griefs, I was obliged to bend down low over a book, and thus lost several sentences, which, from the widow’s pleased appearance, were, I felt convinced, something very complimentary. She was evidently in the full tide of success; and jealous and angry I sat twisting my bracelet, and wishing her a journey to the North Pole.

“The dinner passed off, the guest departed, and there was nothing left but retrospection. Strange to say, Mrs. Medway married a wealthy Southerner; and years passed on, but I saw no more of Mr. Groveswood. He had been travelling for some time, and I looked back on my youthful dream with a smile.

“At nineteen I felt that I was no longer a child; and as I had not been troubled with a second love-attack, I deceived myself into the belief that I had become quite a sensible kind of person. I had changed my character too; instead of the novel-reading child, I was transformed into a laughter-loving girl, whose passion for the ludicrous was perfectly incurable. Every trace of bashfulness too had quite disappeared; and I could now laugh at my former tremors in the presence of visitors.

“One day, upon entering the drawing-room of an acquaintance, I saw a slight, elegant-looking man, whose *tout ensemble* seemed familiar; and when he turned fully around, I beheld Mr. Groveswood. At first I was rather embarrassed at the idea of meeting him again, and felt the color mounting to my cheeks, while I wondered what would be said and done on both sides; but I might have saved myself the trouble of any such emotion, for the gentleman, with the most perfect unconsciousness of having seen me before, honored me with a courtly bow on being presented, and resumed his seat. I was half disposed to laugh at the total failure of my projected scene; while at the same time, I did not see what right I had to expect more. Mr. Groveswood was handsomer and more elegant-looking than ever; but I noticed that he was paler, and had an air of languor which suffering alone could give. I saw too that his hair was now streaked with the silver threads, whose absence I had regretted three years before—in short, he was now the exact beau ideal of my youth.

“‘You do not seem to remember me,’ said I, at length, to see what he would say, ‘I believe I met you, three years ago, at —’

“He seemed surprised at first. ‘The name,’ said he, ‘struck me as being familiar, but you are very much changed since then.’ He looked as though he considered this change for the better; at least so my vanity interpreted it.

“‘You too are changed,’ said I.

“‘Yes,’ replied he, sadly, ‘sickness and suffering leave their marks.’

“We seemed to have changed characters entirely; his pensive, half melancholy tone almost brought the tears to my eyes; but I endeavored to make him forget such feelings, and soon elicited a smile—for the laugh which had offended my girlish taste for melancholy and concealed griefs, was now gone.

“‘I really do not remember how it came about—even now I can scarcely realize it; but one day I found myself saying, ‘love, honor, and obey,’ and now they call me, ‘Mrs. Groveswood.’”

“‘I will tell you how it came about,’ said Mr. Groveswood, “a lonely, broken-down old bachelor, with no home which he could call his, met with a warm-hearted, enthusiastic girl, who seemed to pity his misfortunes, and tolerate his faults, and asked her to take him ‘for better or for worse.’ She must tell you which it has proved—I do not like to bear witness against myself.”

A single look was turned upon him, but that was all sufficient. They all revered the half romantic attachment of Mr. and Mrs. Groveswood.

“Well,” observed Mr. Darmidge, “the case has now been tried, and clearly proved, and ‘first impressions’ are as worthless as a lover’s vows.

**Moral—always remember, young ladies, that : debut, that very individual will be sure to catch
when you expect any gentleman in particular, : you in curl-papers and a morning wrapper. The
and take extraordinary pains for your first court will now adjourn.”**

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"FORGIVE AND FORGET."

BY CLARA MORETON.

FAR—far away in New England, in a retired and beautiful valley, there lies a little village of white houses, with green lattices; a broad river now gliding—now tumbling along through it; and in the distance, all around, mountains rising so high that their rocky tops almost touch the clouds that float in wavy lightness above them.

The river murmurs and foams along, reflecting the blue sky by day, and the golden gleaming stars at night, bending in its course to bathe the sprays of the drooping willow, or to lave the roots of the violets that star the mossy turf.

The woods sweep down from the mountains, and skirt the deep valley in every direction. The dark foliage of the hemlock and pine now looming up in unbroken masses, now contrasting strongly with the light green of the deciduous trees. Between them glanced up green meadows with their little sparkling, gurgling brooks, and orchards which in spring-time are white as snow with their blossoms.

In this dear, delightful valley were the joyous days of my childhood spent.

I was too young to realize the fearful mystery of death when I stood beside the coffin of my only sister. When they lifted me to kiss her marble lips, I longed to arouse her from her beautiful slumber, to lift the snowy lid with its drooping auburn fringe; but so cold were the pale lips which mine had pressed that I turned away in fear, and sat down to wonder if I should ever sleep so soundly that my mother's choking sobs and grievous tears would not wake me.

Years flitted by—years of unalloyed happiness, which nothing but the mingled innocence and ignorance of childhood can yield. After days bring with them deeper joys, but in close companionship come cares and anxieties unknown and undreamed of before.

· Ah, joyous days of my childhood! Beside the silver streamlet, where the tangled wild flowers

bowed enamored of their beauty, amidst the rocks that girded the foaming river in, beneath the arching vines that garlanded the woodland walks—wherever there was beauty in nature, there my unwearied feet bounded, while my heart-pulse thrilled with the purest happiness a child may know. Many a truant hour have I passed

"In the wood, all close and clenching
Bough in bough, and root in root—
No more sky (for over-branching)

At your head than at your foot—

Ah, the wood drew me within it by a glamor past dispute."

There flinging myself upon the broad breast of mother earth, would I dream hopes for the future—hopes, which, in my happy life, have already many of them met their fruition.

But there came days when my childish romps were chided, and my ambition was awakened from its slumber; and so within the walls of our spacious and airy academy I took my seat for the first time as a scholar, filled with an overweening sense of my own importance, and greatly compassionating the companions I left at the "select school" I had before attended.

I was an "academy scholar" now, and I resolved to improve every moment of time, that I might win the honors of the institution, while my love of approbation whispered to me, how exceedingly gratifying it would be to be singled out by my teachers as the most studious of the class. But alas for the fallacy of my resolutions! The first day passed soberly and studiously enough. During the noon recess, I practised over and over again the sounds of the French alphabet, and in the evening I reviewed my chemistry lesson for the morrow; but the second day I sat drooping and listless, with my eyes upon the pages, but my thoughts were far away over the clover meadows; and I barely escaped missing the questions which fell to me in the different classes. My usual good luck helped me

through, and when the five o'clock bell sounded, I jumped from my seat, and like a very child bounded through the entry; and bonnet in hand darted across the road to the meadows—over the green grass and the blooming clover, until I came to the dark pine forest which was my favorite haunt. I threw myself down upon the soft couch of withered pine tassels, and, covering my face with both hands, I wept that I was a child no longer. Before me rose a misty vision of life and its duties, and tremblingly I shrank from the conflict. "I will not be a woman," I cried, and then I sobbed again as I remembered how very useless was the resolve.

A light step rustled the leaves beside me. I looked up. It was one of the teachers—one, whose gentle voice and winning ways had already made me love her. I felt ashamed of my childishness, and I would have arisen, but she sat down beside me, and clasping one of my hands within her slender fingers, she said, "tell me, dear Miss Clara, why you would wish always to be a child." I tried to answer, and at length succeeded in saying that it was certainly very foolish for me to wish to be one always. I expected she would chide me, but no, she commenced in her low, sweet-toned voice to tell me of the interest she had felt in me, how all day she had noticed my wearied looks, and remembered her first days of close application, and when I sprang from the school-room, how she had watched me as I bounded to the pine-grove, and then taking the more circuitous path, had followed me. How I loved her as I looked up into her large, blue eyes, and saw the depths of tenderness nestling there. I threw my arms around her, and told her that for the sake of her dear love I would conquer all difficulties, surmount all obstacles. She folded me closer to her heart, and I felt her warm tears dropping on my face.

"You were not made for a teacher, my dear Miss Gray," I said.

"Circumstances have made me such," she replied.

There came a sigh so deep and long from her heart, that its echoes woke an answering one from my own. How oppressive was the silence that followed that mournful sigh! Not a breeze rustled the "tasseled fringe" which hung in such thick massive folds above us—not even the warble of a bird relieved the intense stillness, as wonderingly I gazed upon the transparent purity of my young teacher's face. Her soft, golden hair was banded plainly over her blue veined brow, and hung in wavy curls behind the rounded ear. A deep bright color like the hue of an opening rose rested on her wasted cheeks, and her small, glowing lips were parted by the breath which came heavily from between them.

"You are surprised at my emotion, Clara," she said, "but when I tell you that once I had a home as pleasant as yours, parents as loving, and brothers as fond, and now, that I am alone in the world, you will not wonder that I am sad at times."

"My dear, dear teacher!" was all that I could say. She clasped my hand tighter within her own, as she sketched for me the incidents of her chequered life. How I reproached myself for repining at my lot, as I listened to the trials which had marked her path from childhood! How earnest were the resolutions that I made to be more worthy of her regard.

It was sunset when we wound our way along the shaded paths that led to the centre of the village, and she left me at the gate of my father's dwelling, with a shadow upon my brow which had never before rested there.

From that hour I date the birth of the self-government, and self-denial which I practised during the remainder of my school days. It is true that at first I frequently flagged in my endeavors, but one smile of affection, one word of encouragement from her dear lips, and I commenced anew. Thus week after week glided away, and I became a studious pupil, and I trust a more worthy companion of my beloved teacher.

Alice Mordaunt was my seat-mate. A noble-hearted and spirited girl, with a countenance glowing with expression and beaming with beauty. She was a Virginian, and had come from the south accompanied by an older brother, who only attended the recitations in algebra, geometry, and Latin. He boarded at the large hotel upon the west side of the village "green;" but Alice's apartment joined Miss Gray's in the more retired dwelling of our principal teacher, Mr. Houghton.

One gloriously beautiful morning in June, Alice and myself proposed absenting ourselves from afternoon school, and accompanied by our brothers, visit a tribe of Indians which had encamped upon the banks of the Warrinoco. Alice wrote a note to Frederic to that effect, but she had found no opportunity of delivering it when the geometry class were called up for recitation. I was to demonstrate the first problem.

"Take this note for me, and he'll have time to answer it," whispered Alice, at the same time slipping it into my hand.

I crossed to the black-board—my brother sat near; I gave him the folded slip of paper, motioning him to pass it to Fred, for there were several between them. I had scarcely reached my seat, when a tall, light-haired young man arose, and walked very consequentially to the teacher, with the folded paper in his hands.

"What is this?" said Mr. Houghton, taking it from him.

"A note which a young lady was passing clandestinely," said the slim youth, in soft tones.

A crimson flush swept up my face to my forehead, and all eyes were turned upon me. Alice cast a scornful, withering glance upon the young man, and his small, gray eyes winced as though they were blinded.

Mr. Houghton stood up in his desk.

"Oh, this reprimand will kill me!" I thought. I knew how severe the rules of the school were, and I trembled as he read aloud the superscription.

"Mr. Frederic Mordaunt, Glenwood Academy." There is some mistake about this note, Mr. Pelton; this is not my name; you can now rectify your error by giving it to the young gentleman to whom it is addressed."

With what inexpressible relief did I listen to the words. Alice had arisen before Mr. Houghton spoke. A look of triumph flashed over her beautiful face, as she briefly acknowledged herself the writer of the note which I had conveyed for her.

As the crest-fallen Pelton took his way to Fred Mordaunt with the note, a suppressed titter ran through the room.

"Silence!" said Mr. Houghton, and there was a plentiful fluttering of white handkerchiefs to hide the lips that would laugh despite the command.

From that hour the thoughtless Alice waged war with the mean-spirited Pelton, as she called him. Every word he uttered she turned into ridicule, and every action she criticized or mimicked, until his name became a by-word. There were placards posted upon the doors, describing a youth whose mother did not know he was out, and headed with a true profile sketch of the doomed pupil; but the Mordauntites were so numerous, that the teachers as well as the small number of Peltonites were always unable to discover who the originators were. At length the poor, persecuted Pelton came to be considered by the teachers as a victim, over whom they ought to spread the shield of their especial protection; and consequently, notice was publicly given to the school, in the large assembling hall, that the next misdemeanor toward him should be thoroughly investigated, and the offender expelled.

Then came a time of peace. The war which had been so diligently waged before ceased; and the young ladies satisfied themselves by drawing down the corners of their mouths, and elongating their chins as they passed him in the street; while the young men would inquire very honestly if there were any letters in the post-office for them. Thus things went on, while vacation approached rapidly.

It was the close of July, and the last day of school, that I accompanied Alice to her room at Mr. Houghton's. Miss Gray came in and sat down beside us. She seemed unusually sad. I who knew that she was going to remain in our village during vacation, imagined that her thoughts were upon the home which was once hers, and that now, while many of her pupils were joyfully preparing for their expected meeting with friends, she was keenly feeling the contrast. I soon found that there was no selfishness in her sorrow, for drawing us still nearer to her, she said, "I have a request to make of you, my dear young friends, but one that I am afraid to make, lest I shall be pained with a refusal."

"We could refuse you nothing, my beloved teacher," I replied.

"No, nothing," joined in Alice.

"It is a simple thing," said Miss Gray, "and only requires obedience to one of our Saviour's commands. Now answer me candidly girls—do you not think that in carrying out your dislike to Howard Pelton, you have acted more under the influence of wrong feelings, than he did when he gave your note to Mr. Houghton?"

Alice looked her surprise. She had never thought that it could be wrong to resent such a mean, low-minded action, as she called it; and Miss Gray noticing her expression, continued,

"You have seen how patiently he has borne all his persecutions, and how uniform has been his conduct since he entered school, never in any other way giving the slightest occasion for reproof."

"I hate such deceitfully good folks," interrupted Alice.

"Do not distress me, dear Alice, by speaking so from impulse," said Miss Gray. "You should not hate anything; I can soon convince you that Howard Pelton is not deceitful. It was his very dislike of the deceit which he supposed that one of you were practising, that led him to expose it by yielding up the note. He has been educated strictly to act from a sense of duty, and if as you think, he has in this case carried his principles too far, it is but——"

"There's no use trying to convince me that he is perfect," interrupted Alice again, "I always have detested him, and I always shall."

So saying, she jumped from her seat, and bounded down the staircase to meet her brother, whom from the window she had espied coming toward the house.

"It will be a hard lesson for Alice to learn, to 'forget and forgive' throughout life," sighed Miss Gray, as brushing the tears from her eyes, she went into her own room, and left me to join my friends.

September, with its beautiful skies, and pure,

soft breezes, stole gently into the vale which summer had deserted. The ripening fruit hung in clusters from the trees and vines, the birds warbled joyously from the boughs, and the glad children frolicked in the shade, rejoicing in the beautiful world which had been given them to play in; for how could they dream that it was but a battle-ground, upon which, in after years, even the weakest must bear a part in its fearful conflicts. Even while the merry laugh went up from their midst, there was a sound of weeping and choking sobs of grief within a curtained room of Mr. Houghton's dwelling.

Miss Gray, our beautiful, fragile teacher, was fast "passing away" from us. The hectic flush which had given such strange loveliness to her face, was replaced by the ashy paleness of death; but the wan lips still moved tremulously, and as I bent my head I caught the whispered message, "*tell Alice to forget and forgive.*" A gentle smile rested upon the pallid mouth, as bursting from its fetters of clay, the spirit, purified by the sorrows of earth, soared to its angel home.

The next day brought Alice to Glenwood again. She had not heard during the vacation of Miss Gray's illness, and when the stage stopped beside the gate, she sprang from it, and bounding up the avenue with a light step, she entered the parlor, and gazed with mute surprise upon the enshrouded form which lay before her. I was seated alone by the window, and as I arose to welcome her, she questioned me with quick impatience,

"Is it her?—is it our dear teacher?"

I threw my arms around her, and tried to check the sobs that were almost choking me as I replied, "yes, Alice, it is—and her last thoughts were of you, for she said, 'tell Alice to forget and forgive'—these were the last words she uttered."

Alice's wild grief was painful to look upon, as bending over the cold face of clay, she sobbed out a prayer for forgiveness.

Another form darkened the doorway and stood by the side of the dead.

Alice lifted her eyes and looked up into Howard Pelton's face. Extending her hand, and grasping that of the young man, she said, in a voice choking with grief, "can you forgive me, Mr. Pelton, for the unkindness which I have shown you?—can you forget it to be my friend for the sake of——"

She could say no more.

"I deserved all, Miss Mordaunt," replied the young man, "I alone was to blame; and perhaps the shame and mortification which I have suffered since, may in some measure atone for my error. You cannot have despised me for it more than I have despised myself."

The soft, south wind swept through the open window, and lifted the damp, golden tresses which clustered around the marble brow of the sleeper.

Was it a smile that played upon her countenance, as Alice Mordaunt and Howard Pelton stood there with clasped hands?—no, it was but the fitful shadow of a swaying vine, and we turned with full hearts from the lifeless form of our cherished teacher.

JENNY GRAY.

A NEW ENGLAND SKETCH.

BY ELLEN GRAHAM.

CHAPTER I.

"WELL, what's the matter, Lucy?" said Squire Thornton, laying down the last Farmers' Monthly Visitor, which he had been poring over an hour or more. "What has gone wrong to-day?" and he shoved his spectacles up over his forehead, and bent his clear, blue eyes on his niece's rueful countenance.

Lucy had been gazing intently into the bright wood fire the whole evening. The glowing coals had apparently matters of importance to communicate to her attentive mind. She gazed and gazed, yet no brightening of the countenance told of her gaining thought or knowledge from the blazing wood. Click, click went the knitting-needles in her busy fingers; faster and faster they flew with such notable speed, that had Mrs. Thornton waked from her comfortable doze in the arm-chair, she would have felt the same interest as did her worthy spouse in regard to the cause of such unwonted industry.

Squire Thornton's fine old homestead was situated about half a mile from the busy little village of Dalton, and on the banks of the Pemigewasset, that queenly stream which winds so gracefully in and out among the rugged hills and smiling vales of New Hampshire. There was a serio-comic expression on his countenance as he now questioned his niece, as though her troubles were quite as likely to call forth mirth as sadness. For it was no uncommon thing for the young lady to be very much afflicted; if she could not attend all the parties and pic-nics in the neighborhood, if she did not receive letters in due time from some schoolmate, her devoted friend, whom she never should forget, though she lived till fourscore, and to whom she was never weary of writing page after page, crossed and recrossed breathing unbounded devotion and friendship. But unless saddened by some such sorrow, her heart was always full of gladness and sunshine. Enjoying the every day occurrences of life with such a zest, that it would put good-humor into the heart of a cynic to see her. Ever full of pleasant little plans, sometimes intending to surprise her uncle with a warm, new comforter, making her aunt a very tasteful needle-book, or a purse for her Cousin Richard, or satchel for little Will. These articles were manufactured

with the utmost secrecy, the happy receivers being kept in profound ignorance of the good fortune in store, till the unexpected gift appeared finished and complete before their eyes. How eagerly did Lucy work on these simple offerings, painting over and over again in her warm, glowing heart, the delight of presenting them to her surprised friends! But as we have said this bird-like joyousness often gave way to depression, and at present some sorrow weighed heavily on her spirits, and not until her uncle interrogated her the second time did she cast down her eyes to hide the gathering tears, and reply,

"Uncle, I want to go to the singing-school to-morrow night, and Dick says he will not take me. I would not care so much about it, if I had not invited Miss Gray, the school-mistress, to go with us, for I thought he could not be so uncivil and unkind as to refuse to take us."

"Pooh, child," said her uncle, "don't fret about that—I wonder at your supposing he would go, for you know he professes to hold parties and singing-schools in abhorrence. I am going to Dalton to-morrow night on business, and will take you and Miss Gray in my old-fashioned sleigh. And though it isn't quite so stylish as his, is much more comfortable, I think."

But this arrangement did not quite content Lucy. She had thought with no little satisfaction of appearing at the singing-school, the resort of all the beaux and belles of the village, escorted by such a fine, manly fellow as her cousin, and accompanied by Miss Gray, who was considered the best singer in the school; as well as the prettiest girl to be found in a dozen miles. Dick was admired very much by all the young ladies, they declared he spoke so eloquently in the Lyceum debates, and whatever might have been their previous opinions, his powerful arguments convinced them at once that truth could only be on his side. There was Miss Willis, the lawyer's niece, who had brought from Boston her fair self, and enough fashionable clothing to set half the young ladies in Dalton crazy, designing to give these unsophisticated people a glimpse of city manners, and the benefit of her improving society for the winter: even she had deigned to say such flattering things of young Mr. Thornton, she thought him nearly as handsome as the city

gentlemen, and was most studiously polite to Lucy after seeing him in church on Sunday. It was no wonder then that Lucy was seriously vexed that her cousin would not enjoy his popularity, and was so perfectly indifferent to the opinions and admiration of the village maidens.

Although the squire had commenced reading again, he knew that all was not right yet. And as he possessed the power of penetrating the weaknesses of human nature, particularly of such open natures as Lucy's, he at once guessed the cause, and looking up good-humoredly, said,

"So you are not satisfied with having your old-fashioned uncle for a beau. Well, perhaps the school ma'am will be better pleased with me. We are the best friends in the world, and I promise myself much pleasure from a ride with such a nice, sensible young woman."

"Oh, uncle, we shall both be glad to go with you, but Dick vexes me so much with his odd notions. He seems to despise the female sex completely, at least all that are young and pretty. Old Aunt Clary Dow seems to be the only female he can tolerate. And somehow I fancied he would like Miss Gray, and I am sure she couldn't help liking him he is so intelligent, and then I thought how delightful for them to be married and live here with us; but he declares I won't find him gallanting any one to such foolish places as singing-schools. Just think of that, uncle. Unless he brings home Aunt Clary as my cousin, I fear he will become a crusty old bachelor."

"No danger of that, Lucy, he hasn't seen the right one yet. These people that laugh so much about love and matrimony, are sure to fall in love more desperately than any one else. Richard has the greatest esteem for the fair sex, and is rather susceptible than otherwise, only he don't know it. He despises the arts, frivolity, and vanity of foolish girls, and because he has never happened to meet with a sensible, well-educated, pleasing young woman who just suited his fancy, he imagines there are none, and makes many remarks that he don't really mean."

"Well. I don't see how he is going to meet any one if he never goes to a party, but stays at home all the time looking after the farm, or reading books. I am sure he is old enough to think about getting a wife."

"Yes, he is old enough, it is true. I would like much to see him settled in life, and I know of no one I would sooner choose for a daughter-in-law than this Jenny Gray. And I feel confident she would just suit him if he should become acquainted with her, and that you can manage very well when she comes here to board. You must keep it all quiet, and just prepare a trap for the young gentleman, and when he is caught, you can laugh at him in revenge for his uncivil speeches."

Now Lucy's eyes danced and sparkled in the firelight. Here was just what she liked, a little plot, a gunpowder plot in fact, to blow up her cousin's heart. She was to arrange all the preliminaries, and the unconscious Miss Gray was selected to set the whole in a blaze, and bring about a new order of things entirely. Her knitting work was thrown upon the table, she couldn't think of knitting when she had so much to think of. How she would laugh at Dick, and quote his remarks after he was fairly in the net. Lucy was so much delighted that she could not sit still. She threw more wood on the already blazing fire, ran to the window to look out on the pure snow that glittered like diamonds in the clear moonlight, humming old ditties, and occasionally imprinting a hearty kiss on the weather-beaten cheek of her uncle, who appeared for the third time busy poring over the interminable paper. Her lively joy no doubt awoke her aunt, for the good lady looking up, declared it quite time to think of going to bed, and that for her part she was tired with baking that day, and then knitting all the evening; and seemed to be perfectly unconscious that she had enjoyed a very comfortable nap, some two hours long. Lucy's heart was so full that she wanted to tell her aunt all about her plans, and indeed she did tell her before she half knew it, and concluded by saying,

"Now don't you like the idea, aunt? Don't you think Dick ought to be married?"

"Ln, child, what nonsense you are talking. What put such an idea into your head. The idea of that boy being married! You must be dreaming," exclaimed the fond old lady, as she gathered up the knitting work which had fatigued her so much, and proceeded to look about the house to see that everything was safe for the night.

Mrs. Thornton was one of the kindest-hearted old ladies that ever lived. Her pleasure and enjoyment consisted in managing her household affairs, making the nicest butter and cheese, amply providing for the wants of her own family, and laying in a supply for the sick and needy. Although her eldest son stood full six feet in his stockings, she still persisted in thinking him a boy, and fully believed that he required her watchful care quite as much as Will, the other son, who had just entered his teens. The thick comforters, stockings, and mittens, which she provided for him were sufficient to last a man his life-time, but the fond mother never thought he had enough. If he went out on a cold winter's day, she was always afraid that he wasn't wrapped up warm enough, and when he came in she begged him to take herb tea to prevent taking cold, very much to his chagrin and vexation, for he hated to be muffled and dosed above all things.

Old Clary Dow, mentioned by Lucy, was a sensible maiden lady of fifty or thereabouts, and much esteemed by the whole family for her goodness and plain common sense, more especially by Mr. Richard, who considered those sterling qualities very rare among the younger females of his acquaintance. Although she had not a single relative in the town, everybody, old and young, called her Aunt Clary. She lived in a snug white-washed cottage, in the outskirts of the village, quite alone if we except a sleek, fat, grey cat, who looked altogether too good-natured and indolent to eat mice, and a yellow dog, with bright, black eyes, who sat beside his mistress at the table, and ate most decorously from a shining tin plate. The village could scarce have existed without this worthy woman. She was every one's resource in every emergency. If sickness or death entered a family, she was there with ready hand and kind heart. If a wedding was in anticipation, her help was necessary in making all the preparatory arrangements. At a quilting-party she was indispensable, for no one understood like her the mysteries of putting in, marking out, and rolling up.

The morning after Lucy's conversation with her uncle, she was up bright and early. She seemed very gay and happy, her heart flowing out toward everything, the dogs, cats, and chickens were fed bountifully, and she was never weary of assisting with the "housework." Her aunt thought her very industrious, but never imagined what a host of plans were flying through her brain. All remembrance of what she had told her the previous evening had vanished like a dream from her mind; indeed who would entertain for a moment the preposterous idea of a boy of twenty-five being married?

Dick made remarks that day which would have highly offended his cousin, had she not been sustained with the expectation of seeing the young gentleman's opinions changed before long. He would not laugh at parties and singing-schools by-and-bye, she thought, and say that girls only went to see the beaux, and beaux to see the girls. He would not call every one a simpleton who entertained the idea of matrimony. He would not say that there was not a young lady in the region whose head was not filled with nonsense and vanity, and that none of them had half the sense of Aunt Clary.

In the afternoon, Aunt Clary herself came to spend the afternoon and drink tea with Mrs. Thornton. The two old ladies sat and talked together of the times when they were young, of cooking, and knitting, recounted wonderful dreams, and discussed the merits of the last Sunday's sermon. Mrs. Thornton descanted at large on the pains and ailments of every member

of her family. Any one would have pronounced them, from her account, more fit for a hospitable than any other place. She fully believed that there was not one who enjoyed a moderate degree of health. She affirmed that "Richard's constitution (though he looked strong as Hercules) was miserably weak, and what made matters worse, the foolish child would never take a bit of medicine, he was just like his father in that respect; but for her part she thought it did a body a sight of good to take a few airbs and roots."

Although Lucy's thoughts had been centered on something besides the singing-school that day, tea time found her ready dressed with neatness, her hood and cloak, and singing-book in brown paper cover close at hand, so that it would not take her five minutes to be ready after the tea things were washed. Little Will thought it the strangest thing his brother was not anxious to go. He longed for the time when he should be accounted old enough to figure at these fashionable resorts, which at present wore an air of mystery to him.

"So you will not take the young women to the singing-school this evening, Richard," said Squire Thornton, inquiringly, as they were at tea.

"No, father, I would rather not; you know I was never fond of any such places. Will can drive 'old Sorrel,' and will take them safely enough; I am going to drive Aunt Clary home in my new sleigh, I would rather talk with her than any young lady in town. I mean to install her the mistress of the sleigh, and don't intend to ask any one else to ride in it."

"Don't be too sure, Cousin Dick," said Lucy. "I will bet anything that you will invite some one else to ride in it this winter, and that you'll be very sorry when the ride is over, too."

"Oh, but I shant bet," said Dick, "for I don't wish to win anything from you, and besides it is against all honesty to bet on a certainty."

"But will you give me your grey colt, that I begged you so much for last summer, if I turn out a true prophetess?" said Lucy.

"Certainly, with pleasure, colt, saddle, bridle, and whip, you will deserve them all. And, moreover, I will esteem you the most wonderful reader of futurity ever known."

"Well, we shall see," said Lucy.

CHAPTER II.

THE Thornton District, as it was called, was very small, and contained but one or two wealthy families. The "school money" was so trifling that it was scarce sufficient to initiate the rising generation into the mysteries of "reading, writing, and ciphering." In order to make the most of it, the custom prevailed from time immemorial

of giving the board. Great account was made among these rural people of boarding the school ma'am. Preparations were commenced several days before the arrival of the important person, and carried on with the most untiring zeal. Whilst every child looked forward to the time as a jubilee equal to Thanksgiving and Independence day.

A week or so after the occurrences related in the foregoing chapter, an uncommon bustle commenced in the squire's house. Lucy had been wakened from her dreams long before the first streak of daylight appeared in the east, and told "to make haste, for they had everything to do that day to get ready for the school ma'am." Mrs. Thornton could be seen hurrying to and fro, enveloped in an enormous check apron; sounds of beating, stirring, and rolling proceeded from the pantry. Old Joe Simons, the man of all work, was dismissed from his woodchopping, and sent to help the "women folk" for the whole day. The havoc carried on in the store-room was frightful. Flour, sugar, butter, eggs, etc., disappeared with fearful rapidity, but assumed, however, a more tempting shape under the skillful management of Mrs. Thornton. Old Joe carried on a merciless slaughter among the poultry. Deafening cries resounded from the precincts of the barn, as some promising captives were marched off to adorn the triumphal approach of this rapacious teacher, or when the blood-thirsty Joe again appeared armed with clubs, to prosecute yet farther his ravages among their flying ranks. One would never have guessed that such preparations were intended for the entertainment of a single individual, had a marching regiment designed to partake of the worthy farmer's hospitality, very little more could have been necessary for their sustenance. The closet-shelves actually groaned beneath the weight of the provisions. There were rows of apple and pumpkin-pies, cup-cake, ginger-bread, cookies, and doughnuts, custards, and puddings, besides the indispensable brown bread and beans, and the carcasses of Joe's poor victims hanging suspended around the walls.

Lucy had special charge of the cleaning department. Every room was carefully swept and dusted, but her chief energies were exerted in arranging the "spare bed room" for its expected occupant. The curtains and table-cover were of spotless white. The bed, decked tastefully in a quilt of her own piecing, loomed half way up to the ceiling in the profusion of feathers. The andirons were rubbed and polished, with the wood and kindlings placed on them ready to light a fire at a moment's warning. Lucy cast a satisfied glance around the room after the pleasant task was finished, gave a last rub to the

glooming-glass, dusted for the third time the old-fashioned mantel-piece, and pronounced every thing in order.

The next day, a few minutes after the clock had chimed four, Miss Gray appeared at her new home, where she received the warmest welcome. Lucy was more intent on her plan than ever, when she saw the predestined pair together in the evening. She thought them the finest-looking couple to be found in the region, and that it would be a downright shame if they did not please each other. Dick was tall, robust and hardy, with a countenance expressing energy and intelligence. Eyes of dark blue, a brown, yet clear complexion, and a mass of dark brown hair shading his expansive forehead. Lucy was very glad to detect him gazing at Miss Gray several times as she was talking to her uncle with much animation, and felt sure that his belief in the want of sense prevalent among young ladies was somewhat shaken by her charming and sensible conversation. But Dick sat and spoke not a word. How strange that he should feel so shy and backward! Every word seemed to desert him if he made an attempt to speak, some invisible chain seemed to fetter his tongue and close his mouth. "Surely," thought Dick, after returning to his own room, "I can't imagine what made me so stupid to-night; Miss Gray will think me a perfect simpleton." Well, what if she does, Mr. Richard?

The next afternoon, Mr. and Mrs. Thornton went to drink tea with a neighbor, so the young people were quite alone. The sound of Dick's voice had scarcely been heard all day, and at tea time the spirit of silence seemed to seal his lips. Lucy began to feel restless, for she thought it time the first reserve had worn off. So in order to facilitate the acquaintance, she insisted on parching some corn after tea, calling Will, who was busy with slate and pencil, to help her find the best ears of corn. Will thought his cousin very hard to please, for it was nearly half an hour before she found corn to suit her, so that the poor boy's teeth quite chattered with the cold. After she was satisfied, they proceeded to the kitchen to parch it, and Will had now a fine chance to warm himself, shaking the pan over the glowing embers. He was not allowed to stop till an enormous bowl was filled with the crisp kernels looking like snow-flakes so white and feathery. Then a dish of apples had to be brought from the cellar, their rosy cheeks wiped carefully, though Will thought Lucy twice as long as she need be doing it. "All is going on right," thought the manœuvring damsel, as she entered the sitting-room, and found the couple conversing very sociably; Dick's tongue being completely unloosed and very efficient from its late rest.

The days now passed swiftly away, the acquaintance progressed rapidly, Dick drawing in unconsciously the fatal poison. Sometimes he and Miss Gray sang together, a very dangerous thing for two interesting people to do, the union of voices having a powerful tendency to produce union of hearts. Sleep began to forsake Richard's fine blue eyes, he lost himself in very delicious reveries, sighed occasionally, and exhibited various other alarming symptoms. His mother's fears were excited, and she busied herself preparing very elaborate decoctions to strengthen the boy's constitution, Dick's opinions on certain points began to change imperceptibly. He began to think singing-schools not quite such foolish affairs as he had said heretofore, and even thought he might be persuaded to go the next night if Lucy teased him very much to accompany them. But no, the evening came, and Lucy did not even ask him to go, but proposed walking and taking Will for an escort. How vexatious! He wanted to go twice as much as he did before, but about half an hour after their departure, he remembered that he wished to purchase a certain book, and started off for the village. On passing the hall, he thought he would just step in and hear them sing a few minutes. Mr. Garland, the teacher of the singing-school, was a very prepossessing young man, a college student, who by extra study in summer was allowed to be absent from college in winter, which was spent in teaching in order to recruit his finances. Besides the singing school he taught the village day school, and also another class in music at Woodstock, a small village about five miles distant. He was a fine, active, dashing fellow, full of life and spirit, and had gained the admiration of young Thornton the first time they met. Dick entered the hall unobserved, just as they had commenced some familiar tone, and were busy beating time. He found a seat in an unlighted corner, where he could see and be unseen himself. But his eyes did not wonder long from one particular face, the centre of attraction for him. He felt half inclined to join the singers, at least he thought he would wait till the close and walk home with his cousin, for he began to think Will was no protection at all. His meditations were, however, cut short by Garland, who announced at the end of the tune a recess of ten minutes. Then followed a Babel-like confusion. Such a talking, buzzing and moving, some hurrying *en masse* toward the stove, others going out, while a few remained quietly in their seats, among whom were Miss Gray and Lucy. Dick was just thinking of emerging from his hiding-place and speaking to them, when his intentions were forestalled by Garland, who remained chatting with the two young ladies till the ten minutes passed away.

Young Thornton's sensations were by no means enviable. At first he sat with his eyes riveted on the expressive features of the pretty school-mistress, then he felt a peculiar fluttering in the region of his heart, then he began to think Garland acted like the most conceited coxcomb in existence, and he wondered how Miss Gray could seem interested in the conversation of such a fellow. This state of mind was not improved by hearing a dialogue carried on in a very loud whisper, between two young ladies who had wandered into his vicinity.

"Look," said one, glancing toward the group which occupied Dick's thoughts, "see how attentive Mr. Garland is again to-night."

"Yes," said the other, "did you ever see the like? I don't think he has had his eyes away from her ten minutes this evening. He will walk home with her to-night, I know."

"Well," replied the other, "I think she is just as much in love with him as he is with her."

Dick was by this time quite as uncomfortable as any one need be. "To be sure," he thought, "it don't require a great deal of penetration to see that she is pleased with him. But what do I care if she is, what is Miss Gray to me?" and he gave his head a slight toss, expressive of perfect indifference. "I'll go home and read this book. I don't see what I came here for at first. I always said singing-schools were humbugs, and I think so now more than ever, it's the last time I will be guilty of being at one this winter."

So thinking, he threw his cloak about him, and walked out of the hall as quietly as he came in. Poor Dick strode home at a wonderful pace, seized the book as though he really meant to devour it, and commenced its perusal; but it very strangely happened that he could read no farther than the first half dozen lines. His thoughts flew off without his having the power to recall them.

The next day being Sunday, Mr. and Mrs. Thornton rode to church in the old-fashioned sleigh, while Dick drove the young ladies and Will in the double sleigh. Miss Gray was so agreeable and entertaining that the dismal young gentleman began to open his heart a little for sunshine. His moody reserve wore away by degrees, and by the time they arrived at the church steps, he had mentally decided that he had been too hasty the previous evening. During service some part of the harness became disarranged, so that the church was quite empty by the time he had repaired the mischief and driven round to the steps. But alas for his comfort now, whom should he see but Garland, standing earnestly talking to the young ladies, keeping them entirely absorbed by his pleasing conversation. A cloud gathered on Dick's brow in an instant. He cast

a half furtive glance from under his knit brows toward Miss Gray; but she was completely occupied in listening. This was enough for our sensitive hero, his dreams were all over now, and he began not only to despond but to despise Garland, innocent though he was of any intention to injure him. In his vexation he nearly upset the sleigh, but the undaunted music teacher unconscious of giving offence, talked on in the best of spirits, gallantly assisting the ladies into the sleigh, arranging the buffaloes with care, and then to crown his audacity, as Dick thought, jumped in himself and rode down to his boarding-house with them.

A few days passed, and the first disturber of young Thornton's peace of mind, left and went to the next house to board her allotted time. But instead of restoring his wonted cheerfulness, and bringing back his old smiles, jokes and songs, he seemed all the more depressed and gloomy. The house appeared to him intolerably dull and lonely, his time hung heavily on his hands, he had no heart for business, his very countenance bore the expression of a moody, dissatisfied man. His mother was truly alarmed at his unwonted behavior, and attributing it all to the weakness of his nervous system, recommended *valerion* as usual—what a remedy for his disease! So matters stood when it was arranged that the two singing-schools should meet; the singers of Dalton riding over to Woodstock and joining their voices with their neighbors. The evenings were bright moonlight, the sleighing fine, and all the young people were anticipating anxiously the appointed evening. The girls were busy preparing something a little extra to wear, and the beaux were employed in negotiations for sleighs, horses, bells, etc., so that there might be conveyances for all. Dick met knots of young men talking eagerly every time he passed through the village, and saw signs of the approaching festivity with no very enviable feelings. A new sleigh, lustrous with fresh paint and gilding, was pointed out to him by some communicative individual, as being engaged for the occasion by the master himself. "So he's going to take Miss Gray," thought Dick, with a sigh, as he turned away, and a feeling of envy flashed through his mind, as he suffered himself to think of the enjoyment it would afford him to be in Garland's place. He had just turned his horse's head toward home on the very morning when the important ride was to take place that following evening, when hearing his name called he looked around, and saw no other than Mr. Garland approaching him. Dick gave him a very cold nod, accompanied by a look which might have told the schoolmaster, had he not been too busy to study expression, that he was not regarded with much affection in

that quarter. But intent on his own affairs, he begged Mr. Thornton's pardon for detaining him, but wished that he would oblige him by taking a message to Miss Gray on his way home, as he was too much occupied to go over himself. Dick looked more majestic, dignified, and awful than ever, while Garland went on.

"Oblige me then," said he, after Dick had muttered something expressive of his willingness, or rather unwillingness to deliver the message, "by telling Miss Gray that Mr. Connor, who is going to take his niece, Miss Willis, to the singing-school to-night, will call for her. This arrangement will be much more pleasant for her, than being crowded with a dozen others into a double sleigh, as she expected to go at first. I would take her myself," he added, "but I can only procure a single sleigh, and that will of course be filled with Lucy and myself."

A new light flashed over Dick's mind, his eyes brightened, and he became wonderfully cordial in taking leave of Mr. Garland. "What a dunce I have been," thought he, "so it is Lucy, only Cousin Lucy he admires. Why didn't I see it before," said he, as he called to mind certain blushings and stammerings, which had affected her whenever Garland's name had been mentioned, and which he had been too much blinded to construe aright.

Young Thornton rode toward home in the best of spirits, delivered a certain message to Miss Gray, at which she turned "delightful, rosy red," and he looked very much pleased and very happy. As may be supposed, Mr. Connor was informed that Miss Gray was engaged, and everything looked bright to our hero—"Richard was himself again." His spirits were a little damped by finding that his old friend, Aunt Clary, was favoring his mother with a visit that afternoon, and no doubt relying on his constancy anticipated a ride in his sleigh that evening.

"Why, Richard, you are in haste," said Squire Thornton, as Joe led his horse to the door; "perhaps Aunt Clary will spend the evening with us, you can drive her home by-and-bye—the evenings are almost as bright as day now."

"Father, I—I am going away to-night," stammered Dick. "Will must take 'old Sorrel' and drive her home."

A meaning smile gathered about the squire's mouth as he saw how affairs were turning out.

What the result of this ride to Woodstock was may be inferred from various circumstances. After the school closed in the "Thornton district," Dick seemed to have a great deal of business at B—, the residence of some one—I can't say whom. Two or three times a week his horse's head was turned that way, and his horse's feet allowed no rest till he arrived at a little white

cottage, a very comfortable place, if we may judge by his unwillingness to leave it.

CHAPTER III.

"Lucy, Lucy, come here," said Richard Thornton, one bright morning the following spring, "here is something for you."

Lucy ran to the door and actually clapped her hands with delight as she saw the beautiful grey colt "all saddled and bridled," stand pawing the ground.

"How beautiful!" said Lucy, as she stroked the arched neck of the graceful creature. "What a superb saddle! Are you really going to give it to me?"

"The colt is yours already, coz, you have fairly won it. So take it, you little witch, and you can ride to your heart's content."

"But I must give my treasure a name—you have always called it Little Gray, but I shall christen it Jenny—Jenny Gray. You will not be angry, will you? It will do no harm if there are two Jenny Grays."

"Name her that by all means, it will recall such delightful associations. Two Jenny Grays! Pray what are you thinking about. In one short week your little colt will be the only one of that name, the other will be changed, I hope, to Jenny Thornton."

And so it was.

LIVING TOO FAST.

BY ELLEN ASHTON.

"WHEN I marry I shall live like Mrs. Maberry," said Mary Johnson, to some companions of her own age, which was about seventeen. "There's Helen Bowlby, a far prettier girl, threw herself away, when she married that stingy Mr. Thornton. The Maberrys are always riding out, give two or three parties every winter, and have an unexceptionable establishment. But that Thornton never drives his wife out at all, says he is too poor to give parties, and as for their house it is only fit for a day laborer. How I do detest meanness!"

The fair speaker raised her voice in her earnestness, forgetting that her father was reading the evening paper, at the other end of the room. He now looked up, and said,

"Before you abuse Mr. Thornton for meanness, Mary, you should be certain that you know his income. If he cannot afford the luxuries you speak of, he is only practising a proper economy, in refusing to indulge in them. Many a man, who ends by cheating his creditors, begins by living too fast: and, in fact, the former is generally sure to follow the latter."

Mr. Thornton had the reputation of being a plain, unostentatious man, who had acquired a competency by prudence and economy. His daughter, however, who knew less of the value of money, regarded him as too old-fashioned in his notions, and often sighed when he denied her what she thought necessities, but he considered foolish superfluities. She answered, therefore, unconvinced,

"But I know it is stinginess in Mr. Thornton, and not economy, for he is in business for himself, while Mr. Maberry is only clerk in a bank. He is a vulgar, close-fisted, old money-hawk."

"My child," said the father, "such language is not lady-like: where did you learn it? Besides, it is exceedingly presumptuous in a young person like you, to speak so positively, especially when you speak to the injury of another."

He spoke severely, and Mary, for a moment, was abashed. She was mortified to be reproved before her young companions, and pouted her pretty lip accordingly. But, in a few moments, she returned to the conversation.

"I'm sure," she said, addressing her father, "that I don't mean to be unjust to Mr. Thornton. But Helen has always been accustomed to a carriage, large rooms and a good deal of company."

"Yes! Mr. Bowlby is rich."

"Well then, pa," cried Mary, brightening up, "where things have become necessary to her, it is cruel in her husband to deprive her of them. Everbody notices how she has lost her color. And it all comes, they say, of her sedentary life, in the close rooms of that little box of a house, where her miser of a husband has buried her."

"I have no doubt that Helen would enjoy better health if she could live like she did in her father's house," quietly said Mr. Johnson, much to his daughter's surprise. "But if her husband cannot afford to live in that costly style, it would be criminal in him to do it, to put roses into his wife's cheeks. Helen, when she married him, knew how he intended to live, for he was very frank with her, as I had it from Mr. Bowlby's own lips. She loved him, however, and consented to make sacrifices to be with him. Her own words were, that she 'would rather live humbly with a husband who possessed her affections, than roll in luxury as the bride of a man she despised.' And though I am too old to be romantic, and am considered by all you young ladies," and here he smiled archly at Mary's companions, "as dreadfully matter-of-fact, yet I must say, I think Helen made a more sensible speech, than you did a while ago."

The girls all laughed at this home-thrust at Mary, who was herself a second time abashed. But she soon recovered her courage again, having a habit of being rather tenacious in an argument.

"But, pa," she said, "you take it for granted that Mr. Thornton cannot afford to live better than he does. Now this is the whole question. I assert that he can, for he makes more money than Mr. Maberry, who lives twice as well." And, as she spoke, she glanced triumphantly around the circle.

"My dear," said her father, with another quiet smile, "I think you will admit that I ought to know something of the expense of living; for I have kept house ever since I was married, and that was thirty years ago. Now I do not hesitate to say, that Mr. Maberry cannot live as he does on the salary of a bank clerk; and that Mr. Thornton spends quite as much as a prudent man, beginning business, should spend."

"But Mr. Maberry does not run into debt. At least no one says that of him," said Mary.

"Confess now, papa, that he may, if a managing man, live on his salary."

"I would rather suppose that he has some private patrimony, of which I know nothing," replied Mr. Johnson. "But I am positive that he can't drive out weekly, with his wife, dress her in brocades, pay five hundred a year for a house, go to Jenny Lind concerts with tickets at five dollars a head, and give expensive parties: yet do all this on a thousand, or fifteen hundred dollars at the utmost. The thing is simply absurd."

Mary shook her head in smiling disapproval. Mr. Johnson, who had been about to resume his newspaper, added on seeing this, for he had something of his daughter's tenacity of purpose.

"Why how obstinate you are, child," he said, a little testily. "If I, when a young married man, had lived as fast as Mr. Maberry does, I would never have got ahead at all: and you, my dear, instead of living in a fine house, would probably have been earning your bread by mantua-making. And I did as good a business too, as Mr. Thornton does now. Depend on it," he added, a little sharply, "if Mr. Maberry has no private fortune, there'll soon be an end of his fast living. Should Mr. Thornton spend money in the same way, I, for one, would not consent to discount his note at our bank; for as he could not afford to live in that way, we, as one of his creditors, would have to help pay for it."

The conversation here dropped, and nothing further was said on the subject, for many weeks. At last, one day, when Mr. Johnson came home to dinner, he said,

"Mary, do you remember a discussion you and I had, last spring, about Mr. Maberry and his style of living?"

"Yes, papa."

"Well, the mystery of a bank clerk affording such extravagances is explained. He has been detected in embezzling from the bank, and has confessed to having speculated for years."

"Oh! his poor wife," cried Mary, and burst into tears. Her father kindly took her hand.

"I feared that the young man had some criminal resource of this kind, but did not wish to run the risk of doing him an injustice, by expressing my fears. Yet you, you remember, called Mr. Thornton mean, because he was too honest to live beyond his means. You pity Mr. Maberry's wife now: you pitied Mr. Thornton's then. But would you not rather deny yourself, like the latter, for a few years, than live extravagantly awhile, like the former, to be forever after pointed at as a felon's wife?"

Mary had continued to weep, but Mr. Johnson had proceeded without pausing, for he wished to impress a salutary lesson on his daughter; and he thought that, the more acutely she felt, the better prospect there would be of this.

At last Mary answered, flinging herself, as she spoke, into her father's arms.

"I was wrong," she said, "foolish girl that I was. Better, better be like Helen, a thousand times, than like Mrs. Maberry."

And you will say so, too, reader—will you not? Believe us there is always danger for those who

LIVE TOO FAST.

"NO STRAWBERRIES FOR SUPPER."

BY JANE WEAVER.

"Isn't tea ready yet?" querulously said Mr. Warren, to his wife, looking at his watch.

"No, my dear, it is not time; but I will go and see that it is prepared at once," and Mrs. Warren rose, with a sigh, and left the room.

"Always the way with these women," growled the husband, as his wife closed the door. "They never seem to know that a man is hungry, after a day's hard work, and wants his meals the instant he comes in. I believe if I was starving, I couldn't get tea before seven o'clock, 'pon my soul I do."

After the lapse of about ten minutes, Mrs. Warren returned, and announced that tea was ready. Her husband, who had been chafing the whole period at a delay that, after all, was inevitable, gruffly rose and followed her into the dining-room.

"Humph," he said, taking his seat and glancing around the table, "no strawberries for supper."

Mrs. Warren looked up timidly.

"I could not find any, in market, to-day," she said, "under twenty-five cents a box; and I really thought that too exorbitant a price."

"Why I bought them, yesterday, for fifteen cents," said Mr. Warren, crossly, "it's very strange."

"But to-day was market-day."

"The more reason for their being cheaper. But you have no talent, I do believe, for marketing, and wouldn't ask a huckster to take less, no matter how she might be imposing on you."

To this sally of ill-temper Mrs. Warren made no reply. Experience had taught her that argument with Mr. Warren, when he was in the wrong, angered, not convinced him.

For some little while, the husband sat silent. He was vexed that his wife did not answer him: indeed, in his present mood, he would have been vexed at anything. At last he said,

"Are there any preserves left?"

"No, my dear," replied his wife, evidently annoyed. "It is late in the spring, you know," she added, apologetically, "and the last were consumed a fortnight ago."

Mr. Warren pushed his plate away, and rose from the table angrily.

"I declare," he said, "it's too bad. A man can't get a decent meal in his own house. No strawberries, no preserves—nothing at all that is palatable."

"But indeed, my dear, I didn't like to pay so much for strawberries," interposed his wife, in a tone of expostulation, "and I thought, for one night, you could do with toast. You used to be fond of toast."

"Not when strawberries are in season," gruffly replied the husband, walking to the window. "I wouldn't grudge half a dollar, a box, to have some strawberries."

Mrs. Warren paused a moment, and then said hesitatingly,

"Perhaps Jane could find some in the neighborhood. I'm sure, my dear, I am willing even to go myself."

"Find some in the neighborhood! Yes, miserably stale ones, mashed out of all shape, and sour from being kept so long. Besides, my tea is spoiled now and its of no consequence."

This ended the matrimonial colloquy. Mr. Warren, as he spoke, opened the door, and left the apartment, sulkily muttering to himself; while his wife, relieved of his presence, gave free vent to the tears, which she had checked in his presence.

No lover had ever seemed to worship his mistress more than did Mr. Warren the pretty Emily Howard. Until they were married, the gratification of her wishes appeared to be his only desire. But, from the hour that she became his wife, his demeanor gradually changed. The natural selfishness, imperiousness and irritable temper of the man began now to develop themselves; and gradually Mrs. Warren saw all her bright dreams of felicity fade away forever. Her husband was always finding fault with her, do what she would. The dinner was either underdone, or overdone, the coffee at breakfast was too weak or too strong, the shirt-collars were not stiff enough or as rigid as iron, or some other alleged mistake, or neglect, had occurred in Mrs. Warren's administration of the household economy.

At first the young wife had resented the injustice of her husband. The change from adulation to censure was too sudden for her to be as yet reconciled to it; and, having considerable spirit, she became angry in turn. But she soon found that this only increased the difficulty. Had she persisted, indeed, in this natural indignation, an open rupture with her imperious husband must have been the consequence, to be followed by a separation, if not a divorce. For

the sake of her children she resolved to bear all, rather than let things come to this conclusion. How many thousands have done likewise?

Mrs. Warren is now really a heart-broken woman. Her husband loves her, as a tiger loves a pet; and, after a fashion, exhibits his affection for her. He gives her all she asks, and even more; is proud of her lady-like demeanor; and boasts among his male acquaintance what an excellent housekeeper she is. But, at home, he is fast wearing her life away by a series of petty fault-findings, such as we have described, the

result of his intense selfishness: yet, strange to say, he thinks it extraordinary that his wife does not love him as she did in the days of their earlier acquaintance, and wonders why she has grown so nervous, so faded, and so given to fits of weeping.

While novelists are flooding our literature with romantic pictures of faultless lovers, it is well occasionally to follow up the picture, and show what sort of husbands such lovers sometimes become.

THE ADOPTED CHILD.

BY CLARA BEAUMONT.

CHAPTER I.

A CLEAR April sunshine rested on the heavy masses of brick and stone that filled up the streets of the crowded city—the sweet, warm breath of early spring was abroad upon the air—and flowers peeped forth from the windows, and clustered together in bright masses upon the side-walk. It was a lovely day; soft, balmy, and delicious; crowds were, in the streets, handsome equipages rolled swiftly along, and a joyousness seemed breathed in the very air—in the April sunshine that brought warmth and gladness with every ray.

The dark walls of the hospital were already wreathed with the deep green ivy—the trees in the enclosure were covered with light, gossamer sprays of foliage, and the turf there looked greener and softer, as though it were a spot apart from the rest of the city—a place upon which had breathed the influence of some good angel, to consecrate it henceforth and forever. Two or three men stood near the gate of the hospital; and their loud voices and laughter seemed almost profane when contrasted with the quiet that hung about the building—the refuge of the sick and suffering. A pale, wan-looking invalid, just released from the sick-room, came slowly down the walk—wrapping his cloak closely about him, for he felt chilly even in the warm sunshine. The gate opened, and two men, bearing a coffin between them, advanced toward the house. The invalid shuddered nervously, and shrank from the touch of their garments; for he saw that the coffin was a full-sized one, and there is something more melancholy, more like reality in the death of one who is strong in years and stature—when a child dies it seems like the fading of a flower, or the passing away of a bright sunbeam. But the men still continued their laughter; they did not see the coffin, they heeded not that it had even touched their garments as it was borne past them.

A wild-looking man, with the marks of care and grief in his countenance, and his whole appearance in a most disordered state, hastily entered the gate and walked hurriedly along. The men were just entering the door with the coffin; and forcing himself beside them, he asked in a tone of suppressed emotion for whom it was intended.

"Can't tell," replied one of the men, indifferently, "it is for some woman who died last night."

A cold chill seized the inquirer, and he leaned

heavily against the door. A benevolent-looking, elderly man approached the coffin-bearers, and upon receiving his directions they proceeded up stairs with their burden. He had not noticed the man; but a white face was now raised beseechingly to his, and a voice almost unintelligible whispered:

"Tell me, doctor! does she yet live?"

The kind heart experienced a thrill as he paused before giving utterance to the truth; and the man exclaimed huskily, "I see it all!—she is *dead*, and it is her coffin that they have just taken up stairs. She has gone to receive the reward which was denied her on earth, and I am a wretched, lonely man!"

He covered his face with his hands to conceal the tears wrung forth by the extremity of his sorrow; and the kind-hearted doctor, although accustomed to such scenes, felt a strong sympathy for the poor man's grief.

"Do not forget, Wychnor," said he, kindly, "that you have three children who look to you for comfort and support. You are not altogether lonely."

With a strong effort the man dried his tears, as he replied sadly, "I do not forget it, sir—but oh! you cannot tell the loss I have suffered! You will not keep me from her now?"

"No—you can go up now, Wychnor—but be calm, I entreat you. Remember that hers is the better fate."

With a tear in his eye, the doctor passed out at the door; while Wychnor walked feebly up stairs. He longed, and yet he dreaded to behold that gentle face again. Almost in a dream, he entered the room and gazed upon the features of the dead. How beautiful they were, even in death! But the eyes that had ever beamed lovingly upon him were now veiled by the white lids—the gentle voice was hushed forever—and not a breath, not a movement stirred the dreadful repose of the whole figure. Consumption had wasted her almost to a shadow; and, lying there so wan and emaciated, it seemed difficult to believe that the still pulse had so lately fluttered with life; and pressing one last, lingering kiss upon the cold brow, he stood and gazed upon the couch. Then stopping as softly as though he feared to disturb her repose, he left the room and passed out again into the busy street.

He returned in a short time, accompanied by

three children. A fine-looking boy of eight years assisted the unsteady steps of his pale sister, who might be about two years older; but her features were sharpened by ill-health, and her lameness rendered the walk a painful effort. But the sweetness of her smile, when quieting her brother's fears, seemed almost like an angel-gleam—it lit up those pale features with so celestial an expression. Her eyes were bent lovingly the while upon a beautiful child of five summers, whom her father led by the hand; and she seemed to feel toward it all a mother's care and pride. But tears stood in the dark orbs as they approached the hospital; and she remembered that they no longer had a mother. The boy's full lip quivered, but the little one entered the house of death gaily; and the voice of her laughter, for the first time, fell painfully on their ears. Again the cloth was lifted from the white, still face, and the boy's grief burst forth in loud, convulsive sobs; while the lame girl knelt at the head of the coffin and wept silently. But the child seemed to wonder at it all; and clung closely to her father, as though afraid of the motionless figure. He carried her to the coffin; but she turned away her head, and could not be prevailed upon to kiss the face that had bent over her from earliest infancy.

The undertaker's men had come to carry down the coffin; and sadly the little band of mourners followed it to the obscure spot that was to constitute its last resting-place. It was soon over; for the burial of the poor occupies but little time; and sad and silent they returned to their lonely home.

The Wychnors were English by birth, but they had no connection with the nobility—they did not even rank among the second class—steady and industrious, with means sufficient to keep them from want, they worked on without repining at their lot, until a series of misfortunes reduced them to absolute poverty. For sometime they struggled bravely on; but when Paul Wychnor beheld the rose fade gradually from his wife's cheek, and her once bright eyes grow dim and lustreless, his spirits sank within him; and flying from his native land, in hopes of giving to the loved one a few more years of life, he found himself in America with no friend to welcome him, no place which he could call "home"—and scarcely any money to provide necessaries for the invalid.

He had been a carver, and he now made every effort to procure work; but he was poor and friendless, and no one seemed disposed to assist him. His wife was fading daily, and his inability to procure her necessary comforts preyed upon his spirits; but at length some kind person obtained admittance for her in the hospital—and there he had gone day after day, and watched

her, and cheered her, and hoped almost against hope; but now she was dead—there was no longer to-morrow to look forward to, and despair settled around his heart.

Mrs. Wychnor had been a gentle, lovely woman—one of those persons who seem ladies in any situation; her husband had looked up to her, admiringly and reverently, as one far above him; and it now seemed as though his sole prop had been taken away. Even the caresses of his children could scarcely dissipate his gloom—the bright April sunshine seemed a mockery—and he sat moodily resting his head on his hand, almost questioning the justness of a Providence that to him had allotted all the sorrow, and to another all the sunshine.

The efforts of the kind doctor had procured them a kind of shanty, which Wychnor's taste had fitted up into a sort of habitation; and thither the family adjourned after the death of the wife and mother. The same kind friend had obtained him some customers; and Wychnor's fear of not having bread to put in his children's mouth was now removed.

It was a bright afternoon, about a month after the last events; and the little family were gathered in one of the two rooms which constituted their whole house. The father was busily employed upon a piece of carving, the boy was deeply buried in a book, and Clara, the lame girl, was seated at the window, remodeling an old black dress which had been her mother's—while, as she proceeded with her task, the scalding tears could not be kept back. She had tied a black ribbon around her little sister's waist; for, although the child could not understand its meaning, she experienced a melancholy pleasure in paying this tribute of respect to the memory of her departed mother.

The sound of carriage wheels was heard, and a handsome equipage drew up before the door, while the spirited horses pranced and reared, and seemed to disdain the humble neighborhood in which they found themselves. A slight flush crossed Clara's pale cheek as the liveried footman glanced about him with an insolent air; but supposing that he was looking for some other house, she quietly pursued her work.

"What is that?" inquired her father, "has anything stopped here?"

"Only a carriage, papa, by mistake," but her little sister had rushed to the window, and exclaimed that a beautiful lady was getting out. As she spoke, an elegantly-dressed woman descended from the carriage, and the footman knocked loudly at the door.

Paul Wychnor glanced at the stranger in surprise; but the lady said, with a sweet smile, "I am afraid that you consider me an intruder—but, believe me, my visit is actuated only by the

kindest motives. I have heard of your misfortunes from a friend, and feel the deepest sympathy for you."

The sweet look and tone were irresistible; a chair was placed for the elegant visitor, and seating herself in it, she drew the little Emma to her, and continued: "I heard that you had three children, for whom you were scarcely able to provide a decent support; I have wealth in abundance, but there is no child to gladden my home—my only son is far away—and if you will consign this little rose-bud to my charge, I promise to treat her in every respect as my own child; to educate her like a lady, and in the event of my death to leave her a fortune sufficient to obviate the necessity of her ever descending from the station to which she will be brought up."

The child had looked wonderingly up in her face, attracted by her beauty, and the elegance of her dress, and now crept close to her in the utmost confidence, and played admiringly with a rich bracelet which sparkled on the lady's wrist. A deeper color tinged the fair cheek of Mrs. Delbridge as she spoke; and while awaiting an answer, she stooped down to caress the child. The little girl had one of those rare faces which seem out of place anywhere but in a picture-frame—the rich, chestnut hair seemed tinged with golden gleams, and her deep violet eyes were so large, and dreamy-looking that they gave a spiritual expression to the whole countenance. The face and air were peculiarly aristocratic; both the lady and the carriage appeared to her as familiar objects, and she felt none of that awe which a display of wealth and grandness generally excites in the children of the poor.

Paul Wychnor was so much surprised by this announcement that for some moments he made no reply. Clara dropped her work in speechless terror; and Reuben, looking quickly up from his book, seemed almost ready to double up his fist at the lady for offering to take his sister away.

At length the father replied: "you are very kind indeed, lady, but you know not what you ask of me. I cannot part with my child."

The tone in which he spoke was decided; but Mrs. Delbridge rejoined with a heightened color, "consider before you refuse the privileges which you are denying your child. Is it not a little selfish to prefer your own gratification to her future good?"

She had touched upon a tender point, and the poor man's affection underwent a severe trial. *She* had been his pet—his little rose-bud; and he felt then that it would have been easier to part with either of the others. But the lady had whispered, "would you not like to go with me, dear, and ride in that beautiful carriage?" and the child placed a little hand confidently in hers,

and looked up with a beaming smile. *He* saw it, and Clara saw it too; and they began to think that a barrier was already placed between them and the little one.

"But suppose," said Wychnor, hesitatingly, "that I should consent to give up my child to you?—it might only be doing her a serious injury, for ladies have their fancies, and she may not prove what you expect—and then you would perhaps tire of her, and bring her back to be mortified with our humble way of living."

"No, no," replied Mrs. Delbridge, eagerly, "I promise you that nothing of the kind shall occur. Such a proceeding would be extremely unjust to the child; and besides," she continued, with a smile, "I do not think that I would ever wish to return her—I love her already."

"And I love you," whispered the child.

Paul Wychnor had a strong, though silent conflict with himself; at length he said, "come here, Emma—do you wish to go with this lady, or stay at home with us? She will give you a great many beautiful things—but we have nothing pretty—only this bare-looking house."

The child hesitated for a moment, and then said, "let me go with her, papa."

Poor Clara covered her face with her hands, but Reuben looked too indignant to weep. "What makes Clara cry?" said the little one, "we can ride together in the carriage, and I will give her some of my beautiful things." But Clara, drawing the child close to her, now wept unrestrainedly. "You will let her come and see us, won't you?" said Emma, addressing Mrs. Delbridge.

That lady made no reply to her question; but turning to Wychnor, she said, "you must not think me harsh, if I make some conditions that may sound rather strict. What I require of you is that you give me a document, resigning all right and title to the child—that you promise never to come and see her without my permission—that you do not seek to attract her attentions in any way, and impose the same restrictions on your family. Should these conditions be infringed, it would entirely destroy my plans, and most disagreeable consequences might ensue."

Paul Wychnor's face had been deeply flushed during the progress of these remarks; and he answered somewhat proudly, "these are hard conditions to impose upon a man with respect to his own; but if I give her up, I have no wish to render her life miserable."

"Then you will let me take her?" said Mrs. Delbridge, eagerly.

He caught up the little Emma in one long embrace, and then produced the required document. The discomforts of his own home in comparison with the happy life in store for his

darling had risen up most forcibly, and overwhelmed more selfish feelings. He agreed to give her up. Clara cried again and again, and even Reuben was roused from his apathy; but Mrs. Delbridge eloquently represented the happiness in store for their sister, and promising that they should come and see her once at least, she hastily tore the child away; and the little Emma found herself driving rapidly along in an elegant carriage, while a beautiful new mamma bent fondly over her.

CHAPTER II.

A THREE hours drive brought them to a handsome country-seat, with a close-shaven lawn in front, and noble old trees that created a perpetual twilight around it. Closely pressing the sleeping child in her arms, Mr. Delbridge ascended the broad steps, and deposited her burden on a couch in the drawing-room. Seating herself in a large arm-chair, she bent fondly over the sleeper; and as she gazed upon the exquisite face, hopes, plans and fears crowded quickly into her mind, as she looked forward through a long range of future years. The child was like some beautiful statue of Parian marble, tinged with the warm hue of life; and already the adopted mother felt a pride in gazing upon those perfect lineaments.

Mrs. Delbridge was a handsome widow of thirty-five, with a large fortune entirely at her own disposal, and an only son, who, in obedience to his father's last wishes, had been placed at school in England. It was now three years since his mother parted from him; and it would probably be several more before she could again behold him. She was lonely in the great house; and there were passages in her life which often rose up accusingly before her.

Matilda Forrest, at eighteen, was a beauty without being a belle. Brought up in habits of the closest economy, and constantly witnessing at home the various expedients to make a little go a great ways, her ideas of grandeur were exceedingly limited; and as they saw little or no company, she had not much opportunity to judge of the effect of those charms, which, aided by her looking-glass, she suspected to exist. There were piles of old novels in the house which she devoured rather than read; and in process of time became as romantic, and disdainful of ordinary things as any of the Amandas or Cecillias whose virtues she perused. No longer enjoying the society of common-place beings, and experiencing the usual difficulty with which heroines are tormented—that of “not being understood,” she became fond of wandering off alone among the woods and fields on the outskirts of the village; and it was during one of these rambles

that, as she would then have expressed it, she met with “a congenial soul.” Attempting to cross a bridge on a slippery plank, the fair Matilda lost her balance, and was precipitated into the water; but help soon appeared in the person of a very handsome young man, who had for some time been gazing upon her unobserved—astonished that so lovely and distinguished-looking a girl should be found in the obscure region to which his fancy had chanced to direct him. Matilda blushed her thanks in the prettiest manner, and employed for the occasion a rather incomprehensible speech used by one of her favorite heroines in a somewhat similar case. He accompanied her home, and then of course it was his duty to call next day and inquire after her health; when Matilda looked so beautiful, with her soft, dark eyes and changing cheek, that Clarence Harwood began to feel very much in love. He came again and again, and the two roamed out together; while Matilda began to think that her character of heroine was now complete. He was only a poor young lawyer, who had roamed there in search of amusement—but this was so much the more romantic; he was evidently her destiny, and she succeeded in persuading herself that she was now really in love. The summer passed like a pleasant dream; and one bright, autumn morning Matilda glanced alternately from a sparkling ring on her finger to the sad countenance of Clarence, who murmured tender farewells without being able to tear himself from the spot. At length he really turned to go—saying as he went, in a tone of deep earnestness, “remember, Matilda, we shall meet again; it may be years, for my profession is almost a hopeless one—but as sure as there is a sky above us we shall certainly meet again.” There was a flood of tears in her own room; and the loved one seemed resolved to live on air, for meal after meal remained untasted, and she flattered herself that she was gradually pining away to a shadow; when just as this desirable end seemed likely to be accomplished, a sister of her mother's, whose more fortunate marriage placed her in a totally different sphere, took it into her head to make a short visit to her countrified relatives.

Surprised and delighted at Matilda's grace and beauty, she insisted upon taking her to the city; and with a bewildered head the young recluse found herself in the midst of grandeur which had, as yet, appeared to her only in dreams. By degrees, however, she became accustomed to this splendor; and the perfect ease and self-possession of her manners was particularly agreeable to her fastidious aunt.

“One thing I have to say,” remarked this worthy relative, “and I hope, Matilda, that you will bear it in mind. I have observed that you

are rather addicted to the old-fashioned purpose of being sentimental; this is bad taste, to say the least of it, though I am willing to admit it innocent as long as it does no harm; but if carried to excess, it might lead you to the very unlady-like proceeding of falling in love with some one—a thing which I never could forgive. I have brought you here with some purpose in view—you are to secure for yourself a suitable establishment; but anything so vulgar as falling in love would completely destroy your prudence."

Matilda colored and trembled, as she replied in a low tone, "but, aunt, I do not want an establishment—I am engaged."

"Engaged!" almost shrieked her aunt, "and to some country clod-pole, I suppose?"

Matilda entered into a warm defence of Clarence Harwood; but her aunt interrupted her with, "do not talk to me of this boy and girl nonsense—the engagement is nothing if another more eligible makes his appearance. I wonder at you, Matilda, with that face and figure to throw yourself away upon a poor young lawyer; you might win the wealthy Mr. Delbridge, if you exerted yourself a little more to please him."

Mr. Delbridge was a handsome, fastidious man of forty, whose life had been spent in dodging matchmakers, and shaking off troublesome nephews and nieces, who clung to him with the affection of leeches, and dived after him in horror whenever they suspected an intention of precipitating himself into the slough of matrimony. Struck with Matilda's beauty, he paid her various cautious attentions; and finding that she had no thoughts of holding out a fish-hook and dragging him, panting and exhausted, to the shore, he sent her a most gentlemanly note, which conferred upon her the privilege of becoming Mrs. Delbridge, if she chose. Her aunt chose for her; and after a great many tears and sighs, the treasured ring was sent back to Clarence in a formal note, and its absence replaced by a heavy diamond circlet. A graceful falling of white drapery—a floating of Brussels lace—a few words murmured in a crowded church—a rapid driving away, and travelling she scarcely knew whither—and then the youthful Mrs. Delbridge found herself installed as mistress of an elegant house, with a handsome carriage, plenty of money, and an indulgent husband always at command. She supposed that it was her destiny, and yielded herself to it with a good grace; and sad to tell! when Master Delbridge made his appearance upon the stage of life she discarded all romance at once, and felt absolutely glad that he had been born to wealth instead of poverty.

Twelve years of their unclouded married life passed rapidly away; and then Mr. Delbridge

died. She regretted his death, for though she had never really and truly loved him, he had always been kind and indulgent; and she felt the same grief for his loss that one feels on missing a familiar object from its accustomed place. Mr. Delbridge, being an Englishman by birth, had determined that his son should be educated in England; and leaving half of his property to his wife, he arranged the other half to be placed in the boy's hands upon his coming of age.

Mrs. Delbridge felt lonely—there was a blank in her life since the departure of her son; and having heard of the Wychnors, she determined to adopt the little Emma. The little crib, which had been empty since the baby-hood of Hamilton, was again fitted up for an occupant; and that night the widow bent with tears and smiles over the slumbers of the child she had taken to her heart.

The next morning, the violet eyes of the little Emma were travelling around the room in a sort of stupefied surprise. Instead of meeting the bare rafters, and scanty furniture of the apartment at home, they rested upon the prettily carved crib with its pure white draperies, the rich carpet on the floor, and the handsome articles scattered around. But Clara, dear, kind Clara, was not to be seen; and burying her face in the pillow the child cried bitterly. A light step sounded near her, and a gentle voice spoke soothing words. She looked up, and the beautiful face of Mrs. Delbridge was pressed lovingly to hers.

"Go away!" said the child, pettishly, "I want Clara!" But at length the kind lady's caresses and promises have restored her good humor, and she looks up with a beaming smile.

"Tell me your name, dear," said Mrs. Delbridge.

"Emma," replied the child, "Emma Wychnor."

"No, not Emma, love—it is Augusta now, Augusta Delbridge; and if any one asks your name you must say so."

"But I do not like that name," said the child, "I like my old one better."

"Listen to me, dear," replied Mrs. Delbridge, "you have come to live with me now, and be my child, and you shall have a great many beautiful things, and sleep in this pretty room. But you must be called by my name, and you must not ask for Clara, for she is not your sister now—you have no sister—but there is a beautiful brother many miles off, who will one day come back and live with you. If you are a good girl, and do as I bid you, I shall love you dearly—but if you do not mind me, I will send you back to the ugly home from which I took you. Do you wish to go back to it?"

The child buried her face in Mrs. Delbridge's dress, and clung closely to her. Her cheek flushed

triumphantly, and bending down she gently kissed the fair brow. Then summoning a servant, she said, "dress Miss Augusta in these things, Rachel—I give her into your charge."

The girl smiled to herself at the idea of a charity child being dressed up in this manner; but some indication of spirit on the part of her young charge warned her to be upon her guard. The child loved to creep close to her new mamma and gaze up at her beautiful face; and the lovely eyes of Mrs. Delbridge rested fondly on the exquisite features of the little one.

Remembering her promise, Mrs. Delbridge sent for Paul Wychnor and his two children to caress Emma for the last time; and although at first overwhelmed at the sight of them, her grief soon subsided, and she received their farewell embraces with the greatest composure. Clara sighed deeply as she stood with her pale, quiet face in the midst of all this grandeur, and glanced sadly at the rich attire of her little sister, which seemed to place so great a barrier between them; while Reuben assumed an air half of defiance, as though determined to show a sense of proper pride; but the father gazed upon the splendor around him and thought sadly of the void at home—what though his little singing-bird had found a golden cage? He hastily wiped away the falling tears; and Mrs. Delbridge, following him to the door, said hurriedly:

"Do not forget your promise, Mr. Wychnor—the child, you see, is already weaned from home, and I think it best for all parties that you should not meet again."

"Never fear me, madam," replied Wychnor, somewhat gruffly, "I shall think of her but as one I have lost forever. I only hope that she may be happy in the home to which she has been transplanted."

Mrs. Delbridge's disposition was a very sweet one; and making due allowance for the father's feelings, she replied gently:

"Be assured, no effort of mine shall be spared to make her happy. I have been very lonely, Mr. Wychnor," she continued, with tears in her beautiful eyes, "and if you only knew the pleasure which this sweet child has afforded me, you could scarcely regret the sacrifice. As it is, I feel very much indebted to your kindness—more so than you can ever be to mine."

Every word bespoke the lady, and Paul Wychnor yielded to the fascination of her manner in spite of himself. "I know," said he, "that you are all that is kind and good, and I am very ungrateful—but I will no longer trouble you with my presence."

It was with a feeling of inexpressible relief that Mrs. Delbridge beheld the door close upon the Wychnors; and hastily placing a picture-book

in the child's hands to divert her thoughts, she sat down to her writing-desk. Taking from it a letter, which bore a real school-boy's handwriting, she perused it for the twentieth time at least. Her face was lighted up by a look of inexpressible love, and her smile grew still more beautiful.

"My own dear mother," it began, "I have not done anything bad for a week at least, and fearing that this fit of goodness may effervesce suddenly, I sit down to give you an account of myself while there is something creditable to say. Do you know, mother dear, that I have won the prizes? When they begged me to go out, I closed my ears to their temptations, for I could hear your dear voice whispering so softly, 'endeavor to excel, for my sake, Hamilton'—so I locked myself and my books up together. It is vacation now, and the boys have all gone home to their mothers and sisters, while only I remain with Mr. Marnard. I often wish that I had a sister to write to me—the boys are so proud of their sisters, and show their letters in so much triumph—but there is one consolation at least: none of them can possibly have a mother like mine—you are worth twenty sisters. I got into a regular battle on your account the other day, dear mother, (now do not be frightened—I had no teeth knocked down my throat or eye put out, only a slight scratch on my cheek.) We had a sort of supper among us, in honor of the breaking up; and when the wine was passed around, some one proposed that each should name the lady whom he considered as realizing his ideas of beauty, and drink to her honor. This created a great deal of merriment; one little fellow not as tall as myself proposed, with quite an air, the health of a great belle, who was probably totally ignorant of his existence. When it came to my turn, I gave: 'my mother, the most beautiful even of America's lovely daughters.' This caused an instant uproar; some were angry because they fancied that I intended a disparagement of English ladies—others laughed at the idea of toasting my mother—and one actually had the insolence to murmur something about 'old women!' My blood fairly boiled; in the times of chivalry, you know, dear mother, knights maintained the beauty of their lady-loves at the point of their lances; and I flew at the aggressor in frantic sort. A squabble ensued, in which I came off victorious; and having made them all drink my toast we parted in the best of humors."

Then followed an account of his school adventures, which displayed the same bold spirit. The letter was closely written on every side, and yet the mother read on to the very last word. Then carefully folding it up again, she took out pen,

ink, and paper, and commenced an answering epistle. She wrote, almost doubting the effect her communication might have upon the affectionate, proud-spirited boy; but having represented in touching words the loneliness which had fallen on her since his departure, she told him of the sister he would find on his return, and drew so fascinating a picture of the child she had adopted, that the boy's heart must indeed have been a stone that melted not beneath it.

Six months had now elapsed; and Augusta Delbridge had become accustomed to her new home, and her new name. It was quite amusing to see her pretty imperiousness with the servants; she could stamp her little foot, and issue her orders as imposingly as though she had been a princess born. But a single word, a look even; from Mrs. Delbridge could subdue her instantly; and tears of penitence would stand in the eyes that had flashed so haughtily but a moment before. The child had an unconquerable aversion to beggars, or poorly-dressed people; no persuasions would induce her to speak to, or even look at one, if she could help it; and all memory of Clara, or Reuben, or her father seemed to have faded from her mind.

Mrs. Delbridge now resolved to try a scheme she had long been meditating, and somewhat dreading the result, she ordered Rachel to dress the child in her best clothes; and after making an elegant toilet herself, she stepped into the carriage, accompanied by her adopted daughter. A round white beaver hat, with long, drooping plumes, set off the chesnut curls and violet eyes to the best advantage; and the exquisite face, over which the smiles and dimples flitted like April sunshine, was perfectly enchanting. They drove into the city, and stopping the carriage at the head of a mean-looking street in the suburbs, Mrs. Delbridge alighted, and taking the child's hand, walked leisurely along.

"I do not like this street at all, mamma," pouted Augusta.

"No, it is not pretty," returned Mrs. Delbridge, "should you like to live here?"

The child looked up with a frightened glance, and endeavored to escape from the hand that detained her; but her adopted mother gently quieted her fears, and they walked on together. Mrs. Delbridge trembled as a sign became visible, on which was written, "Paul Wychnor, carver;" and from one of the windows a pale face looked eagerly forth.

"Reuben! Reuben!" exclaimed the lame girl, in a tone of intense delight, "they are coming!—they are coming here?"

"Who?" inquired the boy, as he approached the window. "How proud she looks!" he exclaimed, a moment after, "she will be ashamed of us now, I suppose."

The ci-devant Emma clung closely to Mrs. Delbridge, and with downcast eyes disdained a glance at her former home.

"They have passed on!" said Clara, in a desponding tone.

"Yes!" replied the boy, in a transport of indignation, "she will not even look at us now! Let her go, with her grand clothes, and her grander airs—I almost hate her!"

"Oh, Reuben, Reuben!" said his sister, reproachfully, "do not speak so!"

The pale, sickly face again lighted up with hope as the two repassed, and with a smile on her lips, she even stretched out her arms to the little one; but the child's head was turned aside—and the poor, lonely heart felt a sharp thrill of pain as their figures faded in the distance.

"She is wholly my own," murmured Mrs. Delbridge; and that night kiss after kiss was pressed upon the unconscious face. What mattered it if the lame girl tossed restlessly in her sleep, and felt in vain for a little form to nestle close beside her? What mattered it if the boy muttered curses against the rich and proud, or the father mourned for the two who had recently passed from his humble home? (TO BE CONTINUED.)

THE ADOPTED CHILD.

BY CLARA BEAUMONT.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 150.

CHAPTER III

YEARS had passed; the only son returned, and delighted with the little sister whom he found domesticated there, home now looked pleasanter than ever. He was twenty-one; and as his mother gazed on his noble, ingenuous countenance and manly figure, she felt proud and happy to have such a son; while Hamilton repaid her love with the most intense devotion. From early childhood he had idolized his mother; she had always appeared to him an incarnation of all that was good and beautiful, and his feeling toward her amounted almost to reverence.

The young heir had now come into his property; and old friends crowded about him, while new ones overwhelmed him with compliments and invitations. Mrs. Delbridge was proud of these attentions—proud of her handsome son, who in the midst of a crowd always looked so much superior to those around him—and she accompanied him from one scene of gaiety to another; always urging his acceptance of the invitations which poured upon him from all quarters, and often sending him forth without her. Thoughtless mother! she did not consider in her pride at his superior endowments, the temptations which assailed him—she thought only of the present. Hamilton Delbridge was high-minded, good-tempered, and generous; but always accustomed to the incense of flattery, and brought up to consider his own wishes as law, he lacked steady principles; and the vortex of dissipation into which he had plunged was gradually undermining his sense of right and wrong.

A half suspicion entered the mind of Mrs. Delbridge when she observed in Hamilton's flushed cheek and flighty manner a something different from usual; but a feeling of disgust overwhelmed her when she beheld the son, in whose attainments she had so gloried, carried helplessly to bed; and in the species of delirium which followed, she heard disclosures of visits to the gaming-table, and debts contracted there, the payment of which would make deep inroads into his property. Poor mother! she sat with her head bowed on her hands, weeping the tears of sorrow and disappointment. But while she wept her son awoke; and as a confused recollection of

what had occurred dawned upon his mind, the figure of his weeping mother almost overpowered him. That mother, who had loved him so tenderly, weeping, and for his sake! He sprang out of bed, and knelt at her feet.

"Mother," said he, humbly, "I have repaid your love and care by mortifying you in every way; and after my conduct of last night it is best that we should part. Let me go from the scene of my temptation, and remain from home until the memory of my disgrace shall have passed away. Already I feel that I shall yet become that of which you need not be ashamed; let me go then, dear mother—you will not repent it."

At first all the mother rose within her, and she could not consent to lose him again; she feared that his temptation would be still greater when away from her. But the two sat calmly down, and talked the matter over; and he prevailed at last.

"Do not ask me to write, mother," was his last words, "I may wish you to forget me for a season; let the past be as a hurried dream—and when I return it shall be our meeting for the first time."

Years have passed again, and it is a beautiful day in June. The quiet hum of the locusts is almost the only sound that is audible around the place, that looks almost as though it had fallen asleep in the midst of those shady trees. The venetian blinds are closed to keep out the sun; and the straw-matting on the floor of the apartment, the light, cool-looking draperies, that the wind just gently stirs, and the roses that bloom on the mantel, in vases of rich china, are all in keeping with the season. A young girl, in a light summer dress, is seated at the piano, but she touches the keys idly, as though weary of the task—humming at intervals snatches of songs, with the clear, gushing voice of a young nightingale.

A sound of planing and hammering in the next room has attracted her attention; and she turns her head to expose an exquisite face, that looks like a gleam of sunshine. The chesnut ringlets have turned several shades darker, and are now braided back behind the small ears; but the violet eyes are larger and deeper, with their light

half veiled by the long, dark lashes. The mouth, like an opening rose-bud, is slightly parted with surprise as she looks in and encounters a handsome, boyish face, on which lingers a glance of unspeakable admiration; but the next moment a smile, half of contempt, curls the rosy lip, and she pettishly turns away her head. With a graceful unconsciousness of any listener, she resumes her practising, and the boy turns sadly to his task.

Again alone, Mrs. Delbridge turned with still greater anxiety to the child whom she had adopted; and as added years displayed in the beautiful Augusta all the grace and refinement of the highly-born, she looked forward with pride to the time of her introduction into the world, and the admiration that would follow every movement. No expense was spared on her education; her constant aim was to excel in everything; and few girls of fourteen could boast the beauty and accomplishments of Augusta Delbridge. All memory of a childhood linked with other scenes has entirely passed away; she knows not that she is but the child of adoption—that old associations should draw her toward the poor and lowly-born; her pride is of itself a thing on which she prides herself, and such a disclosure would almost kill her.

But her father has not forgotten her; though lost to him, he cannot drive the haunting image from his mind; and in pity to his feelings, Mrs. Delbridge has at length consented to let him, unobserved, witness his daughter's happiness. Father and son work together; the boy always accompanies him on any mission, and they are now employed in altering one of the apartments in the spacious house. The young girl knew not that such a motive influenced her mother's commands, when she sent her into the room to practise, with strict orders that the door should be left open; she poutingly wondered why mamma wished those men who were at work to have an opportunity of staring at her so. Reuben, now a handsome, noble-looking boy of seventeen, had stolen a glance at the young musician; and completely lost in admiration of the beautiful face so suddenly turned toward him, he stood and gazed in speechless rapture, quite neglectful of his unfinished task. Years had dimmed his recollections; changes had been made in the various apartments, and he did not recognize the house where he had parted from his little sister.

Not so the father; a common observer would have perceived only a casual glance at the occupant of the adjoining room, while his work proceeded as usual; though his heart was throbbing wildly all the while, and he longed to fold her in his arms—but he remembered the words: "I depend now entirely upon your honor, that you will not speak to her, or make yourself known

to her in any way," and he resolved to prove himself worthy of the trust. Despite the years of separation—despite the proud, half angry air which she assumed, his heart yearned toward his youngest born; but although separated only by the threshold, there was a greater barrier between them than that which is raised by bars and bolts.

The boy knew not that the beautiful, proud-looking creature before him, whose slight glance filled him with confusion, had once taken her meals with him at the same little deal table—that years ago she had wound her arms around his neck, and called him "brother." He could not have believed it if any one had told him so—she looked so very different from them all; and he gazed sadly around upon the elegant rooms, for the first time feeling a deep consciousness of his own lowly position, and disdaining the task which had hitherto occupied him. Poor child! his head was filled with various quaint old romances, which he had read almost by stealth, and he longed so ardently for the time when bravery and valor could win their way to the hearts of the fairest and most high-born ladies in the land; how gladly would he have periled life to win one smile from those red lips—one kind glance from those lovely eyes!

His father's voice recalled him to himself, and mechanically he resumed his task; while his eyes filled with tears which he could scarcely conceal. The father's watchful eye lost not a single movement of the girl's, whose every motion was that of high-bred elegance; and he too felt a pride in her grace and beauty, although they separated him farther and farther from her.

Augusta still dwelt upon the look she had encountered from those dark, half melancholy eyes; and a sensation she could not define crept into her heart toward the father and son. There was something which impelled her to fly toward them—but then all the pride of station combined to keep her back; and half wondering at these varied feelings, she could scarcely determine whether it was love or hatred that filled her with these emotions. But presently smiling at the idea of these people ever being anything to her, she closed the piano and hastened from the room. A chill crept into the father's heart as he watched her retreating figure; but soon her white drapery flitted among the trees in the garden, and again his eyes fell upon her with a lingering gaze. Look on, Paul Wychnor; it is thy last sight for years to come.

In the little room at home sat the brother and sister; but Reuben had thrown himself listlessly upon a chair, while Clara bent industriously over her sewing. Her needle flew rapidly along, and sometimes a bright smile lit up her pale features

as she thought of the comforts her work would procure for those she loved. Her abundant hair of the softest texture, is almost the only beauty she can boast beyond that of expression; and yet as she sits there with her loving eyes bent inquiringly upon the boy, there is a high souled beauty in the whole face which triumphs over all regularity of features, or brilliancy of complexion.

"Reuben," said she, softly. She called several times before he heard her; and then he started as suddenly and looked as painfully embarrassed as though he had been guilty of some flagrant act. "Do not look so frightened, brother," she continued, with a smile, "I only wished to ask what you were thinking of."

"I was thinking, Clara," he replied, sadly, "that riches seem most unequally divided. I do not value money for its own sake, but I could do so much with it. You sit sewing day after day, while so many spend their time in idleness." He kept as far as possible from the real cause of his disquiet.

"But, my dear Reuben," rejoined his sister, in a gayer tone, "complaining will not alter this. And it really appears to me that you are somewhat deficient in self-control, if you cannot enter a house where everything around is superior to what you have been accustomed, without feeling discontented with our own humble home. There was one thing, I know," she continued, with a smile, "that was wanting in the midst of all the grandeur; you did not see any loving face to smile upon you there?"

"No," replied the boy, suddenly, "but I saw a face there far more beautiful than anything I had ever before conceived. Oh, Clara! bear with me—for I am very miserable!"

Clara sat there wondering at her brother's strange manner; but before she could recall his words, he exclaimed, "forget all about this, sister—and do not tell my father of it, I entreat you."

Clara readily promised; and then to divert his thoughts, drew forth some carefully treasured papers, on which she had written sometimes at dead of night when the others slept—sometimes by the light of early dawn—and often when alone and weary. It is said that the minds of the lame or deformed are usually developed in an extraordinary degree, to wake up, as it were, for their personal deficiency; and the poems which she read fully verified the assertion, for they bore the impress of the highest order of talent.

Shall I tell how the name of the lame girl was afterward treasured, because of the beautiful thoughts that became as household words in many a fire-side circle?—how even her beautiful, favored sister hung enraptured over those lines written in moments of loneliness and sorrow?—

how all loved her through her writings, that seemed as an angel-hand showering peace, and happiness, and good-will abroad?—and yet how her father's heart still clung to his youngest born?

CHAPTER IV.

TIME has brought Augusta Delbridge to the threshold of her eighteenth birth-day. How beautiful she is! Her small, Grecian-shaped head is set upon the finely-formed neck with the air of a princess; and her eyes, so large and lustrous, are veiled by the silken lashes, as though disdaining to look up. Every feature seems to bear the impress of noble birth, and her exquisite hand and foot are models of symmetry.

It is the eve of her birth-day; and she is seated in her mother's dressing-room to enjoy their usual chat before separating for the night. Beautiful Mrs. Delbridge still! With a loose white wrapper thrown carelessly around her, and her dark hair unbound, she looks so very lovely that the lapse of years is unheeded while gazing upon her, and she seems still as youthful and fascinating as at first. Her hand wanders caressingly amid her daughter's tresses, who has drawn a footstool close beside her, and now sits with her face half buried in her mother's lap.

"How rapidly time flies!" said Mrs. Delbridge. "You will be eighteen, to-morrow, Augusta. It seems but yesterday that you were five years old I can scarcely realize the change."

"My own dear mother," she replied, with a pretty, musical laugh, "do please explain to me the rather inexplicable mystery which seems to cling about my younger days. You often speak of my fifth year, but never go beyond it; had I no babyhood like other children?—was I really born a child of five years old? It is rather a ridiculous question, to be sure; but I am most anxious to know."

The color quickly faded from Mrs. Delbridge's cheek; and alarmed at the effect of her question, Augusta bent over her, exclaiming, "what is it, dear mother—have I offended you?"

"No, dear—it is nothing," replied her mother, quickly. "I shall soon be better."

She recovered herself instantly, saying, with a smile, "you must consider your very natural question a pretty powerful one to affect me in this manner. It is strange, I suppose, but I do not recollect so much about you before you were five years old—children are always more interesting at that period."

Quite unsuspecting as to the cause of her mother's emotion, Augusta was perfectly satisfied with this answer; and said in a gay tone, "well, the ardent desire of my heart for three

or four years is at length to be granted. I am to come regularly out to-morrow night, and be considered a young lady at last!"

"Yes, but I hope that young head will not be turned with anticipated conquests," observed her mother, "for you are very beautiful, Augusta, and there will be plenty of flatterers to tell you so."

"Oh, I am perfectly aware of that, mamma," replied the daughter, carelessly, "my glass has told me so this long time—but I am too proud to be vain. I consider the advantages of beauty and accomplishments so perfectly inferior to those of birth and station, that, if I were a man, I would not marry a perfect angel of low origin."

Mrs. Delbridge trembled to hear her rattle on in this manner; but to her mild reproof Augusta answered: "do not be angry, dear mother; you know that it is my nature, and I cannot help it. I can no more help being proud than you can help being good and beautiful. If some magnificent duke would but come along, and place a coronet on my brow, I think I might possibly accept him; it would be so pleasant, you know, mamma, to be called 'your grace'—but the first thing I should inquire of a man would be his birth and connections, I have such a horror of mis-alliances."

Mrs. Delbridge gazed in surprise upon the young girl before her; she could scarcely believe that this was the child she had taken from a home of penury and want.

"It is strange," she observed, "that two members of one family should entertain sentiments so similar. Hamilton is as proud as yourself, and has often spoken to me in almost the same words."

"Then," replied Augusta, "I am sure that I shall like my brother—a thing of which, at first, I had some doubt. I do not recollect much about him, except as some one very tall and handsome, of whom I stood greatly in awe. Why is it that I have seen so little of him, mother?—and why is he from home now?"

"He always had a roving disposition," replied Mrs. Delbridge, anxious to conceal his delinquency, "and he is now travelling in Europe—but he will come home before long. Here is a letter I received from him lately."

Augusta glanced carelessly over the epistle, and Mrs. Delbridge pondered on the words, "I am sure I shall like him." She too had Augusta's pride of station, although wisely concealed; and she sincerely hoped to herself that there might be nothing more than a brotherly and sisterly affection between them. Augusta, of course, regarded him as her brother; but with Hamilton's admiration of beauty, and the peculiar traits which composed her character, she feared that

he might be led into some imprudence; and, to tell the truth, she would much rather have had her son marry some one of equal birth, and let Augusta form a splendid match elsewhere, than to see the two united.

The next evening the beautiful Augusta Delbridge made her first appearance in public as a young lady; and lovers flocked around her until she became fairly tired of adulation. Proud and indifferent, she took not the slightest pains to please or conciliate; perfectly satisfied that her reputed fortune, her distinguished position, and her perfect face, would bring more admirers to her feet than she knew what to do with, Mrs. Delbridge, whose life had hitherto been quite secluded, seemed to live over her own triumphs; the youthfulness of her appearance was but little impaired, and mother and daughter unconsciously became rivals. Fortune hunters thought it improbable that the widow might marry again; and Mrs. Delbridge, to her surprise, found herself attended by as numerous a string of beaux as ever. Strange that through everything she should still cherish the memory of her first lover—and yet so it was. She heard, soon after her marriage, that he had gone with an embassy to South America; and she now often found herself wondering what had become of him. No marriage of his had ever met her eye in the papers—perhaps he was still single for her sake.

One evening, in a crowded room, the name of Harwood was distinctly pronounced; and soon after she beheld Augusta preparing to dance with a distinguished-looking stranger. He had a foreign air, and an imposing figure, with whiskers, moustache, and imperial. She caught his eye at one time, and there seemed to her something familiar in its expression; but he was soon lost to view among the dancers. At the conclusion of the set, he led Augusta toward her, and inquired, with the greatest suavity, if Mrs. Delbridge had forgotten an old friend?

Almost ready to sink from conflicting emotions her cheek changed from red to pale, and pale to red alternately.

"My heart tells me," said he, in a low voice, as he bent closer, "that you have not forgotten Clarence Harwood."

"You are so changed," she murmured, at length, "so much altered that I scarcely knew you."

"I *am* changed," he replied, with emphasis, "and perhaps as much in outward appearance as internal feelings. But I do not perceive this change in you," he continued, pointedly, "you are the same now that you were years ago."

Mrs. Delbridge scarcely knew whether to consider this as a compliment or otherwise, and to relieve her embarrassment, she turned to address

some remark to her daughter; but Augusta, weary of a scene in which she played so insignificant a part, had again joined in the dance with one of her numerous admirers—secretly piqued that so handsome and distinguished-looking a man should devote himself exclusively to her mother. Still there was something about the stranger which she could not fathom—something that repelled, even while it attracted; and of this incomprehensible manner Mrs. Delbridge soon became aware. There seemed to be a sneering sarcasm even in his politeness; and wondering that Clarence Harwood should be so unlike Clarence Harwood, she still remained fascinated by a strange spell.

In the meantime, the handsome stranger was the cynosure of all eyes, and not a few envious glances were directed toward Mrs. Delbridge; while belles declared that it was a shame for an old widow to take possession of the most distingue-looking man in the room. The reputation of enormous wealth, joined to his commanding appearance, brought more friends to his side than he well knew what to do with; those who had scarcely deigned a passing salutation to Clarence Harwood, the poor young lawyer, were most accommodating in their proffers of service to the rich millionaire. And he stood among them, calm, dignified, and unbending; but the haughty lip would now and then curl involuntarily, while he laughed to himself at the attentions with which he was overwhelmed.

They stood together in the conservatory—those lovers of many years ago; and her beautiful eyes were timidly veiled by their lashes, while her cheek changed rapidly as when she first listened to words of love breathed in olden times. She had placed a white rose-bud which he gathered in her bosom; and now stood trembling and embarrassed as a timid school-girl. He glanced at her with those deep eyes of his, and a strange light sparkled in the dark orbs, and a half smile lingered about the lips that long to breathe in her ear the one word, "revenge!"

Lamps are grouped fancifully around among the leaves and flowers; and holding up a ring in the light, he asks, "Matilda, do you remember this?"

Covering her face with her hands, she burst into a flood of tears.

"Oh, Clarence!" she exclaimed, "be merciful! If you knew how I had suffered for that one act, you would pity instead of blaming me. I thought that you had destroyed it."

"I do pity you very much," he replied, more in a tone of sarcasm than sympathy. "But if you thought I would destroy it you wronged me. I kept it to remind me of 'Auld Lang Syne,' and your letter—I have often read that over since.

It was written with the dignity befitting the bride elect of a millionaire to a poor young lawyer, who had amused her idle hours."

"Oh, Clarence!" she exclaimed, "you will break my heart!"

"So much the better," he murmured to himself; but turning gently to his companion, he replied, "wear this ring now, for my sake, and I shall think that your repentance is real."

She gradually extended a small, and still fair hand; and the ring again rested on the finger where it had been placed so many years ago. He sent a deep, searching gaze upon her as he asked, "is that beautiful girl whom I danced with your daughter?"

Mrs. Delbridge half shrank from his glance as she answered, "she is."

"But I heard that you had only a son," he continued, "and then some story was told me about adopting a beautiful little girl of low origin—how is this?"

Her embarrassment became still greater; but at length she answered candidly, "you are right—Augusta is not really my daughter, but she is the child of my love and care; and I would not that a suspicion of the truth should cast a shadow on that young heart. I have always carefully kept it from her; and with her proud spirit, I do not know what might be the consequences of such a disclosure."

They returned to the company; and struck with the proud beauty of her youthful face, Harwood so far unbent himself as to enter into conversation with the belle of the evening; but Augusta, in order to show him that she was not to be drawn on and off at pleasure, treated all his advances with the most supreme indifference, and scarcely favored his remarks with anything more than a languid raising of her eyelids.

"That pride shall be humbled yet," he muttered, "she little knows that her destiny is in my hands."

That night, when Mrs. Delbridge retired to her dressing-room, her mind was filled with new thoughts; but mother and daughter did not converse together as was their wont. Each felt estranged toward the other; and Mrs. Delbridge was not sorry to have this opportunity of enjoying her thoughts alone. She glanced blushing upon the ring, and scarcely knew whether to consider it as the pledge of a second engagement, or a mere *gage d'amitie*. She sat before the toilet-glass with her head resting on her hand; and smiled complacently as she observed how little time had done as yet to mar the effect of a face which he had once pronounced irresistible. *She loved him yet.*

Let us now turn to Harwood's thoughts, as he too sat alone in his own apartment. Years had

as he said, made a great change in him. They had taken from him the hoping, trusting enthusiasm of youth, and replaced it with the experience, mistrust, and often bitter feelings of middle age. He was a disappointed man. Disappointed in his early love, which had changed him at once to what he was—and then disappointed in his schemes to obtain fame and fortune. Yes, although his friends crowded about him as a fortunate man, he had failed in his endeavors; and laughed to think of their surprise should the truth be discovered. He had learnt a lesson from his early love, and now resolved, like her, to sacrifice himself upon the shrine of Mammon—to marry a fortune as she had done; and to effect this purpose he plunged into gaiety for which he had long since lost all taste. His chance meeting with Mrs. Delbridge afforded him no little surprise; and he now sat meditating upon her conduct toward him.

"I can see that she still loves me," he thought, "and it would be a pleasant revenge to make use of her in this manner; she rejected me for a fortune, and now to have her come and lay that fortune at my feet! There would be some éclat too in marrying the rich widow—and I have a great mind to do it, were it only for the triumph of the thing. That proud girl too shall be humbled yet."

Augusta scarcely knew what to make of her mother's conduct. The idea of her marrying again had till now never entered her mind; and when the thought did occur, it was a most unpleasant one. She disliked Harwood from the first evening she had met him; his cold, sarcastic manner provoked her, and although angry at herself for being intimidated by him, she felt a secret fear of the man which appeared unaccountable; while to her it was so perfectly plain that he only sought her mother for mercenary considerations, that she wondered at her blindness. The idea too of being a dependant, a dependant upon him, galled her proud spirit, and caused her to pass many sleepless nights. The flattered and courted Augusta Delbridge became low-spirited and melancholy; public amusements were now hateful to her, for they could go nowhere without meeting the man whom she disliked; and many wondered at her seclusion, while others were busied in conjectures respecting Clarence Harwood and Mrs. Delbridge. If she had only known her brother, if their early intercourse had been characterized by that intimacy which generally exists between brothers and sisters, if she knew where he then was, she would have written to him and begged him to come home; but he was yet a stranger to her, and she scarcely knew in what part of the world he had taken up his abode.

But, urged on by the hours of misery she had suffered, she resolved to make one attempt to win her mother from her infatuation; and entering her dressing-room with the affectionate manner of former days, she said gently:

"We do not see as much of each other as we used to, dear mother—do not let any estrangement creep in between us."

Mrs. Delbridge was writing a note; and carelessly kissing the pleading face upturned to hers, she replied, "we are both of us more occupied now than formerly, Augusta. But do not talk to me now, love, until I finish this note to Mr. Harwood—he has sent us tickets for the S—'s concert."

The proud blood rushed to her very forehead, as she exclaimed, haughtily, "unless you have some other use for the ticket, mother, you will be kind enough to return mine—I shall not accept his invitation."

"Augusta!" said her mother, in a tone of remonstrance.

"It is of no use, mother," she continued, firmly, "I will not go with a man whom I both hate and despise. You must have seen my dislike to him, and yet you insist upon my tolerating his presence every time he inflicts it upon us."

"'Hate' and 'despise' are strong words, Augusta," replied her mother, coldly, when her first surprise at this vehement outbreak had a little subsided, "stronger, I think, than the occasion justifies—for I never perceived that he forced any disagreeable attentions upon you. He merely wishes to be considered as an old friend of mine."

"I hope, dear mother," replied the daughter, "that you do not think so meanly of me as to suppose any feeling of pique for the absence of these attentions influences my sentiments toward him. I disliked him the first time I saw him—there is something hidden about him; he is deceiving you, dear mother—oh! do not listen to him, I beseech you!"

"Augusta," said her mother, in a tone of decision, while an angry color rose in her cheek, "I desire that you will dismiss this subject altogether, and never let me hear of it again. I am fully competent to take care of myself."

"Then you will marry him!" said Augusta, mournfully.

The color rose as brightly in Mrs. Delbridge's cheek as in that of a maiden who loves for the first time; she remembered now that Augusta was not *her own* daughter—although forgetting that she herself was ignorant of the fact—and she became impressed with the idea that the young girl was only looking forward to the fortune she would lose. Under this impression, she replied haughtily:

"I trust that I am at full liberty to consult

my own inclination in so doing—although such is not at present my intention; strange, Augusta, that an old friend cannot come to the house without awakening such degrading suspicions and fears."

Augusta only partly understood her, but she had heard enough to make her leave the room with the air and step of a young queen; and proudly wiping away all traces of tears, she descended to the drawing-room.

That evening Clarence Harwood and his former betrothed found themselves alone in one of the garden walks.

"And so you think then," said he, with a half sneer, "that love, if it be true, earnest love, will continue forever through all the changes of life? That it must still be absorbing, unquenchable through difficulties, trials, and even despair? May not circumstances turn it to hate? May not revenge prove more powerful than love?"

"Never!" she replied, earnestly, half frightened at the expression of his face, "I cannot understand your theory; where one loves, one must love always."

"Do you practise what you advocate?" he whispered, as he bent down closer, "could you too love always?"

She made no reply, but turned aside to conceal her blushing cheek. He looked at her with a sort of triumph.

"Matilda," said he, "we have both suffered in the years that have passed since we parted—the lover whom you once cast off again pleads his cause."

Mrs. Delbridge entered the house with a light step, and a face radiant with happiness—Augusta sat moodily in the drawing-room. She stopped suddenly at the sight of her daughter's thoughtful face, and almost shrinking from the questioning glance of her eye, secluded herself in her own apartment. When she did gain courage to tell her, the communication was received in silence, without a comment of any description. She wished her to say *something*—anything rather than maintain this rigid silence, and in a peevish tone she exclaimed:

"Really, Augusta, you are a most incomprehensible girl! have you nothing to say?"

"Nothing that would be agreeable, mother," was the reply, "I told you before that I disliked this man—and the daily sight of him is not likely to make me feel more cordially disposed."

The subject dropped; and mother and daughter felt that there was an estrangement between them. Augusta was provoked that her mother's vanity should so entirely have blinded her eyes; and Mrs. Delbridge began to harbor a suspicion toward the child of her adoption, which grew stronger every day. This was strengthened by an insinuation of

Clarence Harwood's; and resolved to disappoint such expectations, she immediately settled her entire property on her lover—blinded by her anger, she heeded not his apparently generous remonstrances, and paused not until she had placed every cent beyond her own disposal.

It was now the eve before the wedding day. They were assembled in the drawing-room; Mrs. Delbridge looking beautiful and happy, and Clarence Harwood near her—while Augusta sat buried in a reverie in one of the windows.

There was a loud ring at the front door-bell—a sound of voices in the hall—and the door being opened, a very handsome young gentleman stood before them. "*Hamilton!*" exclaimed Mrs. Delbridge, as she rushed into his arms; and kissing her again and again, he returned her embrace with the most affectionate ardor. Clarence Harwood, from the bottom of his heart, wished him anywhere else; but on being introduced, he returned his salutation with seeming cordiality.

"Is this my beautiful sister?" exclaimed Hamilton, as Augusta was presented.

She blushed deeply on receiving his brotherly salute; and thought to herself that she never could regard this stranger in the light of a brother. It was rather an awkward time for Hamilton to make his appearance; for there was so much to be explained concerning Clarence; and then he was so much surprised at the idea of his mother's marrying again, that he could not help looking solemn in spite of himself. His dark, expressive eyes constantly rested on Augusta with more than a brother's admiration; and she blushed, though she knew not why, every time that she met his glance. It was evident that he was changed; he was not so gay and rattling as he had been—his face wore a more thoughtful expression—but this pensiveness was tempered by the sweetest of smiles. Everything was expected of him at once; he must answer all their questions, and give an account of himself in the same breath; this he good-naturedly attempted to do, observing, to begin with, that those who looked for anything marvelous in the relation would be very much disappointed. He did not enter into particulars in the drawing-room; but when alone with his mother, he satisfied her curiosity to the utmost.

"You know, dear mother," said he, "that when I left you, at least half of my property was consumed in paying these gaming-debts, and I resolved not to return until I had made up the loss occasioned by my extravagance and folly. I have been so quickly transported from place to place, that my adventures may almost be said to resemble the tales in the Arabian Nights. I have been in Europe, Asia, and Africa—almost every habitable place on the face of the globe; trans-

ported hither and thither as fast as railroads and steamboats could carry me. I rushed on from one scene to another, endeavoring to lose in this constant excitement all memory of the circumstances which had driven me from home; but it would not do—the recollection still remained, fresh as the events of yesterday; and I resolved to try and repair my shattered fortune. I went to London; and steadfastly shutting my eyes and closing my ears to all the temptations of the gay metropolis, I applied myself industriously to business, and have now realized sufficient to make me independent for the rest of my life. Five years is a long time to be separated from those we love—to see none but strange faces and cold hearts; but the ordeal has done me good—I am a different character from the wild son who left you five years ago."

Those in the drawing-room had been entertained with amusing scraps of adventure, and brilliant stories, which made the evening seem extremely short; but they little knew the true motive for this jaunt.

"And now, dear mother," said Hamilton, while a sobered expression came over his animated features. "Are you quite happy in forming this second connection? Have you well considered the step you are about to take?"

"Why do you ask me this question, Hamilton?" said she, reproachfully, "Clarence was the lover of my youth, and it is hardly kind to cast a gloom upon my wedding eve by such surmises."

"Forgive me, dear mother," was the reply, "but I was so much surprised—so utterly unprepared for it; and then," continued he, with a smile, "you know my jealous disposition from a boy, and now there is one who will have a stronger claim upon my mother's love."

But, although he tried to laugh it off, the uneasy feeling still clung to him, and he slept but little on the eve of his mother's second nuptials. There was a silence for some time, and then Hamilton observed:

"What a very lovely girl is that adopted sister of mine! There is something so lofty and elevated in her style of beauty, and she is so exquisitely graceful without the least effort, that it really is quite tormenting to have her regard me but as a brother."

But Mrs. Delbridge answered his remarks coldly, and was evidently but little pleased at the turn which his thoughts had taken. The two separated for the night; each with a feeling of disgust which the other had occasioned.

The morning dawned clear and beautiful; and the widow seemed almost as young and lovely in her splendid bridal dress, as when, years ago, she had first uttered the soulless vows which destroyed her first dream of love. Clarence Harwood glanced at her lovely face with a feeling of pride—it added to his triumph; while Hamilton and Augusta looked on with a mournful sensation, although they tried to appear happy.

The spacious church was thronged with the gay and fashionable. Mrs. Delbridge's five hundred friends flocked to witness her second appearance as a bride, and not a few envied her the handsome bridegroom, who seemed so cold and proud in the midst of his happiness. As she rose from her knees, her dark eyes met his with a beaming look of love; but she was startled by the cold, rigid expression of his features. He seemed to forget that she was before him—that the crowd had assembled to witness their bridal—and when the ceremony was over, he mechanically handed her to the carriage, and seated himself beside her with the same listless expression. The elegant rooms were thrown open for the admission of visitors, who needed no second bidding to enter the hospitable mansion; and the laugh and song went round as they drank happiness to the newly-married pair. Flushed with wine, Clarence Harwood at length relapsed from his apathy; and in his brilliant repartees and joyous laugh there seemed no trace of the unwilling bridegroom.

(TO BE CONCLUDED.)

THE ADOPTED CHILD.

BY CLARA BEAUMONT.

CONCLUDED FROM PAGE 198.

CHAPTER V.

LET us look in upon the Wychnors. Years have brought wrinkles to the father's brow, and added cares to his heart; while he continues moody and spiritless, in spite of Clara's efforts to rouse him. The sweet countenance of the lame girl has undergone no change. There is still the same soft smile and loving look; though the pale cheek flushes brightly as she sometimes glances at those poems which have cast a ray of sunshine over her desolate life. They have changed their home from the close, cheerless street in the crowded city to a pleasant-looking, though *very* humble cottage some miles out of town. Everything without and within is as clean as hands can make it; the rag carpet, which her own hands have pieced together, is free from every speck of dust, and the little garden in front is a perfect model of neatness.

It is a warm day, and the doors are all open to admit the air, disclosing a carefully-kept "best room," whose large, four-post bedstead is neatly draped with white curtains, and covered with a patch-work quilt—while its swelling proportions, and pillows of snowy whiteness seem to promise the most delicious repose. The windows, looking into a little wilderness of roses, and pansies, and flowers innumerable, are also shaded with white curtains, which, although coarse, look neat and pretty. A large Bible rests upon the little table under the glass; and on the mantel-piece are two real silver candlesticks—heir-loom in the family which they have kept through all their troubles. This room is Clara's particular pride; even more so than the pleasant-looking kitchen just opposite—through the open doors of which comes the fragrance of the flowers that are blooming in the garden.

The young housekeeper now makes her appearance with a basket of currants; and as she deposits them on the snowy table, a sudden thought seems to strike her; for going to the foot of the stairs, she calls, "Reuben! Reuben!" but no Reuben answers. Although the journey is to her a difficult and painful one, she slowly mounts the stairs, and with a smile on her face, resolves to scold the young truant roundly. She softly opens the door and looks in; but the little room is empty—no trace of the occupant is there; and while she scarcely knows whether to be frightened

or not, her eye rests upon a folded paper. Taking it hastily up she reads in the well known handwriting:

"I know, dear Clara, that you will think I have done very wrong, but my own conscience quite acquits me. I am now almost twenty-one; and for several years I have hated the tasks to which, from motives of duty, I applied myself. I have thirsted for knowledge, which our means prevented me from acquiring; I have long felt that I was capable of becoming something nobler than a mere drudge for daily bread—and regret at leaving my father and you has been overruled by these considerations. I will write to you, Clara, and you shall have a full and true account of my wanderings and adventures; but do not cry, or feel angry at my leaving you so, because I shall one of these days come back something great—something of which you will be proud, and you will then feel glad that I went."

Poor Reuben! He came home that day with his mind filled with a vision of beauty, and lofty ceilings, and grand furniture; and the little room seemed to grow smaller and smaller, and the narrow street closer and closer, as he mentally contrasted his own home with the gorgeous one he had just left. That beautiful face haunted him in his dreams like an angel visitant; and he would awake, restless and feverish, to pant for air and freedom in the confined limits of his apartment. Brought up to his father's business of carving, the tasks which he executed were of rare beauty and finish; and often, in secret, he moulded various figures, which came far below the ideal he had sought to embody. He read the lives of the early sculptors and painters, and their difficulties and trials possessed a fascination for him; he too determined to succeed; he would go to Italy, that foster-mother of genius, and endeavor there to realize the greatness which was always haunting him like a tormenting vision. But he could not bear to break this to his father or Clara; he knew that they would laugh at his wild scheme, and he feared that their tears and entreaties might turn him from his purpose. So he stole off quietly, and left his adieus behind.

He was gone, and Clara seemed left without a companion. How often, in her loneliness, her thoughts turned to the sister by whom she had been so soon forgotten.

Hamilton Delbridge began to find himself in a dilemma. He found it impossible to regard his adopted sister with the sentiments of a brother; his absence from home, and the little time he had passed in her society contributed toward this, and he began to feel something very much like love for his mother's protegee. Augusta, of course, was ignorant of these feelings; indeed she scarcely heeded him—she was so much taken up with her own troubles; but his conduct often appeared to her strange and absent mind, very unlike the ideas she had formed of a brother. Her step-father she disliked more and more every day; she shrank from his approach with loathing, and he assumed toward her a triumphant kind of an air, as though she was by some means or other in his power. Her mother too seemed estranged from her; they now scarcely met, except at table, or upon terms of common politeness, as strangers meet; and the petted child, who had hitherto been the first consideration with all, now found herself treated with coldness and neglect.

In the full indulgence of these bitter feelings, she was one day strolling listlessly through the garden paths, when the figure of her father-in-law presented itself suddenly before her. His sarcasms were always covered with the mask of politeness; but Augusta, writhing under some remarks which he uttered, felt the full spirit of indignation roused within her; and retaliated in words whose bitterness seemed wrung from the very depths of her heart. She had been long silent, but now the pent-up stream burst forth. She accused him of seeking her mother only for the fortune which *he* received with her—of endeavoring to estrange that mother's heart from her, and make her home miserable—and then, with the air of an empress, she bade him leave her presence, and not intrude upon her retirement with his unwelcome assiduities.

The angry blood mantled in her cheeks, her eyes flashed, and her slight figure was drawn proudly up to its full height. Never had she looked so beautiful; and Harwood gazed admiringly upon her with a smiling composure. Turning her back upon him, she was hastening from his sight; but he was beside her again in a moment—and stooping down, he whispered a few words in her ear.

The color quickly faded from check and lip; and with a wild expression in her beautiful eyes, she stood gazing upon him as though bereft of all power of movement. He smiled, as though satisfied with his work; and the next moment was lost to view among the shrubbery.

But steps sounded near; and Hamilton Delbridge, hastening to join her, was surprised at the expression of her face.

"Augusta? my sister! What is the matter?"

Gazing at him for a moment with a half vacant look, she burst into tears. "Oh, Hamilton!" she replied, as her head sank upon his shoulder, "is this really true? Can they have acted so cruelly toward me?"

"Is what true?" he repeated, while some idea of her meaning dawned upon him. "Who has done anything to distress you so?"

"He said that I was not your sister," she continued, "that I had no right to call *her* mother—no right to this home, or the name of Delbridge. Is this—can it be true?"

Hamilton was silent for a moment; he then replied, "it is indeed true, and I rejoice in its truth. Beautiful Augusta! I have loved you as brothers do not love—endeavor to view me in another light—and could I win the first affections of that dear heart, this disclosure so opportunely made would be blessed by me as an act of kindness."

But his passionate words fell upon a deaf ear, for she had sunk lifeless in his arms.

The blow proved too much for that proud spirit; and a brain fever immediately ensued, which placed her life in imminent danger. Mrs. Delbridge, or Mrs. Harwood, as we must now call her, recalled at length to other duties, took up her station by the bedside of the sufferer; and experienced a degree of remorse for her late neglect. Hamilton glided softly into the darkened room, and concealed himself in the folds of the curtains; but her ravings often affected him to tears, and he would steal out again to weep in silence. Her round cheek became thin and wasted, and her beautiful eyes grew larger and wilder.

Weeks passed, and she was still confined to her room; but the physician now began to give some hopes, and the fever became less violent. She continued to improve from that day; but oh! the blissful delight of unconsciousness! She awoke to sorrow and reality; and as the events which had laid her on a bed of sickness came crowding on her brain, she wished even for the insensibility of delirium—almost wished that she had never awakened from the long death-like sleep that heralded her recovery. She would dwell on the one dreadful idea until her head grew almost wild again beneath the maddening thought; she could not fully realize it—it seemed impossible that she, the proud, high-born Augusta Delbridge should prove to be the child of poverty; but worse still, the child of those whose position and occupation prevented them from ever rising to an equality with the refined and educated. At length, as the knowledge dawned more and more convincingly upon her, showers of tears relieved her burning head; and burying her face in the pillow to conceal her emotion from those around her, she would weep in silence.

She lay one night watching her mother, who sat beside the bed, unconscious that she was awake; and the thought that she could no longer call her by that name almost overpowered her. She had loved her deeply and tenderly, with all the strong, confiding affection of a daughter; but now her mother's late estrangement seemed accounted for. She had grown tired of the charge she had taken upon herself—she could no longer regard as her child the daughter she had taken from its humble parents, to cast aside as a plaything of which she was weary.

Mrs. Harwood started as those convulsive sobs, which could not be restrained, fell upon her ear; and bending over the sick girl with a quick return of former affection, she said gently,

"Augusta—dearest—do not weep! This unfortunate disclosure I had intended to have kept from you, but now that it has transpired, it need make no difference in our love for each other. You shall still be to me as a daughter—for there is none other to claim your place."

She was now perfectly calm; and raising her pale, sorrow-stricken face, she replied, "I am now free from all traces of delirium, mother—for I still love to call you by that name—therefore, do not think that my words are occasioned by a wandering mind. There is one who rivals me in your affection—who has long made my home unhappy—who is the cause of my present misery. That one I need scarcely name; in spite of the wrong he has done me, my sentiments toward him are scarcely different from what they were at first."

"Augusta," interrupted Mrs. Harwood, in a tone of remonstrance, "do not forget that he is my husband—even my love for you will not permit me to listen to invectives against him. I have spoken to him on the subject, and he gave me an account of your conduct upon the occasion which pained him deeply; for, to say the least of it, it showed a great want of respect for one who is at least entitled to consideration as the husband of your adopted mother."

"Then," exclaimed Augusta, with some return of her former pride, while the color rose in her pallid cheek, "it is time that we should part. I knew that he would make his own representations, but he did not tell you of the taunts which goaded me on to this outbreak. He has poisoned your ear with base insinuations against me—this he told me with his own lips, triumphing in my helplessness to avenge myself—but oh, mother! I conjure you, believe them not! If ever a daughter's love for a mother was pure, and sacred, and free from all considerations of self-interest, such has mine been! I believed you to be my mother—how could I think otherwise?—and in my sorrow and regret for your second marriage no such

degrading thoughts as those of which he has accused me ever entered my mind. But I can no longer remain in the home which, till now, I have regarded as mine by right; I will return to the humble place from which you took me, and endeavor, in the affection of my natural relations, to lose the bitter remembrance of what I have suffered here."

Mrs. Harwood trembled violently, and every vestige of color fled from her face. The mournful, half-reproachful words which Paul Wychner had uttered so many years ago: "she may not prove what you expect, and then you would perhaps tire of her, and bring her back to be mortified with our humble way of living," and her own solemn promise to treat her always as her daughter, and leave her a fortune suitable to her position rose up accusingly before her, and humbly and tearfully she begged her to remain; but Augusta was decided. Her natural energy of character strengthened her upon this occasion; during many wakeful hours upon a bed of sickness, her former pride, and self-will, and impatience of all control, rose up in array before her; and she came forth from that apartment not more changed in outward appearance than inward feelings.

But she had still another trial to encounter; the pleadings of Hamilton Delbridge, who entreated her to forget all and become his wife.

"Let me not lose a sister," he continued, "without having the void filled by a nearer and a dearer tie—do not cut off from me all means of happiness, for life is to me hopeless without you!"

How eloquently her heart responded to his words of wild devotion the pale lips revealed not; she was too generous, too noble-minded to repay his mother's kindness of years with what would be to her a most unwelcome blow; she knew Mrs. Harwood's prejudices of old, and the marriage of her only son with one whose origin was so very questionable would deeply wound her pride. Augusta could not blame these prejudices; for how often had she echoed the same sentiments!

"Hamilton," she replied, at length, in a tone of sadness that touched his very heart, "you know not what you ask. I am no longer the proud and courted heiress, whose birth and position are unimpeachable—but the unfortunate child of parents whose greatest crime is that of poverty; I know your proud nature—you would shrink at the appellation of 'son' from one whose hands are rough and coarse with daily labor, whose garb is that of poverty, and whose conversation would probably offend the ear with its want of grammatical accuracy and refinement. You could not regard as your equals a brother and sister

whose only emotion on beholding you might be that of wonder at your superiority."

Hamilton's proud spirit writhed at this picture; but Augusta's beautiful eyes were fixed steadily upon him, as though to mark the effect of her words; and averting his glance, he replied,

"I know all this, dearest; but you have only been made aware of this existence within a few weeks—surely, you owe no obligations to such relatives—there is no reason why you should acknowledge them now, when they so readily gave up all claims upon you."

Her fine eyes flashed at first; but then, as she thought of his peculiar position, a softened feeling stole over her, and she answered gently,

"You are mistaken, Hamilton; I have heard from your mother that my father's consent to this proceeding was only wrung from him by the noble triumph of a consideration for the advantages I would derive over the pleadings of affection. That he pined for his daughter in secret, and cherished her image through long years of separation—pleading only for a stolen glance, lest he should injure her prospects by intruding himself into her presence. Think you not that affection like this is worthy of some return?"

Hamilton could not reply to this question; but he again pleaded his love, and urged her to become his wife. He did not see the tears that stood in her eyes as she averted her head—he only heard her apparently cold farewell; and rushed from the room to pace up and down the garden, and vainly seek relief for his tortured feelings.

Mrs. Harwood, finding Augusta determined in her intention of returning home, endeavored to force upon her several handsome presents; but she refused them gently, though decidedly, and saying, "I ask no reward for loving you," selected the plainest clothes in her wardrobe. Mrs. Harwood already regretted her haste in resigning all control over her own property, for the promise made to Paul Wychnor haunted her like an unquiet visitant; but she had now no means of performing it. In this dilemma she applied to Hamilton, who generously offered to supply any sum she wished to bestow; but Augusta's proud spirit was stung by this liberality—for she well knew from what source it came—and rather haughtily declining any kindness of this description, she prepared for her immediate departure.

In accordance with her wishes, the carriage was at the door; and she bade adieu to the home which had sheltered her for so many years. Her voice faltered, and her eyes involuntarily filled with tears, as she breathed her sad farewell to her whom she had regarded as her mother; but her heart was firm, and having received clear directions for her journey, she entered the car-

riage, pale and tearful, and was borne rapidly away.

CHAPTER VI.

CLARA is busy in the front yard tying up her flowers. A more saddened expression rests on her pensive features since the departure of her only brother; and almost listlessly she pursues the occupation which formerly possessed so great an interest. A handsome carriage is advancing along the road; but Clara, full of her own mournful thoughts, pays little attention to the circumstance, until it stops at the very gate, and the steps are let rapidly down.

A beautiful, sorrow-stricken face looks eagerly forth, and surprised and bewildered, she assists the seeming invalid into the house; who, recognizing the description of her sister, has handed her a letter from Mrs. Harwood. Clara glances rapidly over the lines, wondering at the contents, but delighted to recover her long-lost sister; but as she turns to welcome her home, she perceives that her eyes are closed, and she has fallen listlessly back in her seat.

When Augusta returned to consciousness, she found herself in a room which, although the best in the house, to her looked mean and small. She opened her eyes and glanced upon the plain white hangings, the humble quilt, and the scanty furniture; and the change was quite as startling as when a child of five years old, she sat up in her little crib and surveyed the handsome apartment in which she found herself with wonder and admiration.

But a father's heart had led him gently into the room, a father's eyes were bent lovingly upon those well-remembered features—and looking up she beheld a face that awakened dim, half-forgotten recollections beaming upon her with love and pride. In spite of his care-worn features and coarse garb, she felt a sudden gush of affection for the father who had been as a stranger to her; and folding her arms about his neck she wept bitterly. He cried and laughed alternately as he pressed his daughter to his bosom; holding her off every now and then to gaze upon her, and persuade himself that this beautiful, elegant-looking creature really belonged to him.

Paul Wychnor felt no resentment toward Mrs. Harwood; he could not blame her, for had she not restored his daughter to him? And Clara too, kind, loving Clara! was not forgotten; the poor, forlorn one loved to pillow her weary head on that gentle bosom, and listen to the tones of affection breathed by the softest of voices. And then the stranger was shown all over the little house; she tried to force smiles and praises, although the elegance of her former home would rise up in comparison; and Clara pointed out

each separate plant in her carefully weeded garden, commenting on their various beauties with a feeling of pride—quite unconscious that her sister, nurtured in the very lap of luxury, regarded green-houses and conservatories as articles of every day comfort, and saw little to praise in the flowers which she so much extolled.

A day or two was spent in recruiting her exhausted strength, and then Augusta resolved to enter upon a vigorous discharge of the duties called forth by her new station. She knew that they were poor—she could plainly see that her delicate sister was unfit for much exertion; and with her natural pride and independence of spirit she could not entertain the idea of being a burden upon those who loved her. Clara remonstrated, and her father too added his entreaties; but she was firm, and set about her tasks with a light heart; though delicate and tenderly-nurtured as she had been, she was illy fitted to bear the unaccustomed fatigue, and Clara one morning found her stretched on the floor insensible from very weariness. The kind sister endeavored to prevent a renewal of such exertion; but Augusta persisted in mortifying her own pride—in her days of prosperity she had deemed herself so much superior to others, that it had seemed to her as though she could never fall from this eminence.

Her father's whole existence seemed wrapt up in her; he loved to sit and gaze upon her—to have his tea poured out by her hands—and his gloomy feelings seemed half dissipated in her presence. In compliance with his wishes, she was again Emma Wychnor—for Emma had been the name of his lost angel, the wife who seemed to leave all behind her in darkness and gloom; and he would tell her long stories of that mother's gentleness, and love for her children, until the tears filled her eyes, and she would long that such a friend had been spared to her for the dark days that had now fallen upon her. She would sometimes sit in her own room and weep alone, for the thought of Hamilton Delbridge and his love almost overpowered her; and she would recall the pleading eyes, the noble brow, and eloquent voice of the loved one, and think of what her life *might* have been—while the prospect of the real future loomed heavily up before her.

Mrs. Harwood had visited her several times; wrapt up as she had been in new ties, she now missed the daughter who had left her forever, and she came each time to urge her return—hoping that the discomforts of home might prevail upon her to yield to these entreaties. But although Augusta still loved her, she answered, with a sad smile, that "duty bade her 'stay'—although inclination might whisper 'go.'" Mrs. Harwood never alluded to Hamilton; the subject seemed avoided between them, as though by

mutual consent, and Augusta had no opportunity of ascertaining his feelings.

Poor Reuben!—his dream was rudely broken. Seated in a small studio, which his unremitting exertions had at length procured, he watched from time to time the full glories of an Italian sunset, as he toiled away in the midst of bright visions upon a figure of rare beauty. A letter was handed to him; and as he recognized Clara's well-known handwriting, he tore it eagerly open; but for the first time her communications caused him a pang of regret.

"I have so much to tell you, dear Reuben," she wrote, "that I scarcely know how to begin. Do you not remember that, several years ago, you went, one day, with our father to an elegant home—and on your return you gave so glowing a description of a beautiful face you had caught a glimpse of through a half-open door, that I wondered whether an angel had appeared to you, or whether you had fallen in love with some exquisite picture? I need not ask you if you remember the little sister who, when we were children, was the sunshine of the house, until a grand lady bore her off to lighten up her own splendid mansion? That baby sister was your beautiful unknown, who, even as I write, bends over me, and sends messages of love to the brother whom she has not seen for years. Oh, Reuben, she is very beautiful! no wonder that you almost worshipped her—but she is your sister now, and you will love her very dearly as we all do."

The young enthusiast at first experienced a keen thrill of disappointment—he even buried his face in his hands and wept hot, scalding tears; but at length he overcame this emotion, and applying himself with renewed vigor to his task, even tried to persuade himself that he rejoiced in the fact.

Was Mrs. Harwood happy? Her face was so altered that Augusta noticed it with surprise. She looked at least ten years older than before her marriage; her husband had now no favors to ask, everything was placed in his power; he no longer felt any love for her, and already she began to find, instead of the devoted slave she had expected, a master whose will was law. Inattentive, dissipated, and extravagant, he was often absent from home; and his neglected wife looked sadly back upon the peaceful days of her widowhood, and the grateful affection of the lovely girl whose warm nature she had wounded, and whose love she had repulsed—finding, when too late, that in her place she had taken a serpent to her bosom. At length debts began to grow alarming—creditors became impatient; and to get rid of these annoyances, Harwood suddenly announced his intention of proceeding directly to

Paris. The poor, broken-spirited wife dared not offer the slightest opposition; her trunks were hastily packed—and with tearful eyes she found herself standing on the deck of the vessel that was bearing her to a strange land, with a companion whom she almost dreaded.

Hamilton did not accompany them; he had purchased the old place endeared to him by childish reminiscences, and now remained sole master of the lonely house that no longer echoed to the sounds of merriment. His love for Augusta was deep and absorbing; but he had for some time pleaded with his mother in vain, and he could not bear to add to her sorrows. His pride too was strong and deep-rooted; and when his mother represented, in forcible colors, the annoyances and mortifications he would subject himself to in making such connections, he shrank from the disagreeable picture—and even the figure of Augusta grew dim in the distance as he gazed through all these drawbacks. But then his affection would rise superior to these considerations, and he would renew his pleading until his mother grew almost weary of the subject. But her pride had been humbled, and her spirit broken in the two years of her wedded life; and when she parted from her son, she said to him,

"If you can go, Hamilton, to Augusta's present abode, and in spite of all you may there witness to shock a refined and sensitive taste, you still feel your love return in full force—if you, with your pride and fastidiousness, can accept a bride from such a father, and she returns your affection, then I will not withhold my consent—but I doubt if your love can stand the test."

Poor Hamilton! how strong a conflict rose between his love and pride. How many times he resolved to overcome these foolish scruples, and seek Augusta instantly; and how many times was he turned from his purpose.

At length he resolved no longer to linger; and concluding his preparations in the greatest haste, for fear of a return of irresolution, he set out upon his journey. As he drove along, he wished a hundred times that she had been a dependant on some wealthy relations, rather than the daughter of a man of low origin; for money he did not care—he only feared disgrace. Had she remained with his mother, instead of going back to her low relations, how willingly would he have renewed his lover-like pleadings; but this was a trial to his proud spirit—a severe test of love, and he remained almost trembling lest the carriage should stop at one of the numerous mud-hovels that lined the road.

He approached a small cottage, distinguished from the rest by its air of peculiar neatness. Something told him that this was his destination; and the coachman stopped his horses and let

down the steps. He sprang hastily out; and his impatient knock was answered by Augusta herself. There she stood more lovely than ever in her simple calico dress, with her beautiful eyes cast down, while her changing cheek betrayed her pleasure at meeting him again. She frankly extended both hands; and then with a quiet dignity, led him into the house.

At first she would have taken him to the best room the little house could boast, embarrassed with a feeling of shame that she could offer him no better; but then her better angel warned her of the return of her old enemy, and resolutely casting off all such degrading thoughts, she proceeded to the kitchen. An ironing table, with its clean white cover, and a basket of clothes showed her recent occupation, while some were airing on a large clothes-horse by the fire.

Hamilton bit his lip as he noticed the bare rafters overhead, and saw Augusta preparing to resume her task; but taking the chair she pointed out, he seated himself in silence. Perhaps a deeper color burned in the fair cheek as she bent over some coarse towels, but she was calm, at least in outward appearance; and Hamilton wondered at the quiet dignity which could thus assert itself in the midst of such a scene. Her sleeves were rolled carefully up, and the delicate white hands were strangely at variance with the task she had assigned them; while her elegant figure and aristocratic features seemed very much out of place in that humble kitchen. Both were silent from feelings of embarrassment; but at length Hamilton exclaimed,

"Augusta, I can bear this no longer! To see you, so differently brought up, bending over such drudgery, while I am received as the commonest servant would receive her admirer—it is too much!"

His eyes flashed with pride and anger, and his whole countenance was expressive of emotion as he restlessly paced the floor.

"Mr. Delbridge," replied Augusta, in a tone of quiet dignity, (it was the first time she had ever called him so, and Hamilton looked at her reproachfully) "fortune has, I know, placed a great barrier between us; you are wealthy and courted—while I am poor and unknown; but still I do not recognize your right to insult my poverty. It is the result of no misdemeanor on my part, or those I love; I am quite as proud, although I trust in a different way, as in those days when I considered others intended only to gratify my own desires; and as this is the place in which those who take the trouble to visit me will often be received, I can only say to those who are dissatisfied with it, that I do not urge them to remain one moment longer than their inclination leads them."

"Augusta!" exclaimed her lover, "do not drive me frantic with this assumed composure, when I am perfectly aware that you must hate the sight of a place so distasteful to your former views at least. Fly with me then at once; the carriage is at the door,—and in the pleasures of our own happy home you will soon forget the wretched period that has elapsed, or remember it only as a troubled dream."

"Mr. Delbridge," said Augusta, proudly, "you made me this proposal before I had seen my father and sister—when I had not experienced their affection for the long-lost daughter and sister—their tender care, and noble self-denial—and I then refused it. Do you think I will now prove myself so ungrateful, so lost to all good and generous feeling, even were I disposed to heed the pleadings of a love so entirely selfish, so choked up with pride as to seem rather an insult than an honor?"

And yet she loved him—devotedly; but she wished to humble his pride. She knew what she herself had suffered from the same source, and it was better to do it now than to become his wife, and then experience constant mortifications in his contempt for her relations.

The rebuke was severe, and it stung him sharply. But he could not resist her influence; her noble conduct filled him with admiration, and he replied,

"Augusta, you have subdued me. How paltry and contemptible must I appear to you! I am ashamed of my own weakness; but these prejudices have been instilled into my mind from early infancy—they have grown with my growth and strengthened with my strength—and now they are not easily conquered. But let me see your father, Augusta—I wish to atone, if possible, for my former unworthy feelings."

The old man soon entered from the garden; and although Hamilton winced under the hearty grasp of his honest hand, he succeeded in controlling himself—and turned with a smile to the sweet face of Clara, who had just returned from a visit to some one in want, quite unprepared to find so elegant a stranger.

But Augusta had no reason to blush for her relative; no vulgar officiousness betrayed itself in the courtesy with which they urged him to prolong his stay—no feeling of humbling inferiority because he was rich and they were poor. Hamilton Delbridge returned to his splendid home with very different sentiments from those with which he had left it. He felt that there is a superiority beyond that which birth and wealth can give—beyond even the higher influence of intellect and refinement; he now admired, loved, and revered Augusta, and to see her mistress of his establishment he would willingly have

subjected his pride to any mortifications she chose to inflict upon him.

But full as were his feelings, Augusta did not then reciprocate them. Her mind was occupied with an overwhelming sorrow that put old selfish considerations to flight. Her father, who had for a long time been restless and wandering in his mind, while his health seemed visibly failing, was seized that very night with a sudden spasm; and before the morning dawned, he had gone to join the wife whose death had cast a perpetual gloom over his heart. The two desolate girls were now left without either father or mother; and when Hamilton made his second visit to the cottage, he found them plunged in a grief which time only could alleviate. Again did he renew his entreaties—begging them both to come with him; but Augusta viewed such a hasty proceeding as an insult to the memory of the dead, and steadfastly refused to become his wife until the usual term of mourning had expired.

Hamilton had written to his mother, and received her ready consent; for conscience whispered that she owed this reparation at least to Augusta. He almost wept over the melancholy tone of his mother's letter—she even hinted at the approaches of want; and enclosing a large sum for her immediate use, he entreated her to return to her old home; "Augusta," he added, "would always consider her as a mother, and every wish should be gratified." Mrs. Harwood was violently affected by this touching letter, but she did not accept his invitation yet; she put it by to read over in a season of greater need.

The bridal morning came at last; and pure and beautiful as a snow-drop looked the young bride, as again she entered that beloved home—so different from the haughty one who had formerly swept through those lofty rooms. Her husband's face too was less stern, and self-impressed in its fine lineaments; and a look of devoted love lightened his dark eyes as he bent down to hear her gentle whisper:

"'Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall;' we have both suffered; but oh, Hamilton! let us as we cross this threshold, make a solemn vow to crush all risings-up of the evil one, as we would the approach of a serpent!"

He fervently responded to her adjuration; and arm-in-arm the newly-wedded pair entered the familiar rooms—each leaning upon the other as a staff and a support. And Clara too was there—Clara, who, at first, had made so many independent resolutions to lead an old maid's life in the quiet cottage; but they carried her off almost by force, and installed her in the pleasantest apartments the house could afford.

But Reuben came back in a few years, and insisted upon her superintending his bachelor

abode; he came back as he had prophesied, something of which they were proud—although that is now a forbidden word with the Delbridges—but they were proud of him notwithstanding; for his genius was now known and appreciated, and the self-taught sculptor was already on the road to fortune. So Clara was taken from them—and much they missed her gentle voice, and endearing smile; but her place was soon supplied by the arrival of Mrs. Harwood, who looked a melancholy wreck of former days. She had clung to him till the last; and not until all that remained of Clarence Harwood was deposited in the grave of the suicide, did she return to her former home.

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THE ATTACK.

BY JAMES H. DANA.

It was morning in Syria. The sun poured down its vertical beams from a sky of brass; the leaves hung motionless; and the atmosphere quivered, far and near, as in a furnace.

Under the shade of a clump of trees, close to the bed of a stream, which in winter foamed with torrents, but through which now trickled the tiniest of rivulets, was bivouacked a party of travellers. Their stalwart forms, as they reclined on the grass, betrayed that they had come from some Northern clime, for no native of Syria could boast such thews or similar colossal frames. They were, indeed, a party of Christian knights and men-at-arms.

A little apart from the main group, under the thickest of the shade, appeared another, and smaller group. The principal figure was that of a young maiden, who slept with her head pillowed on a saddle, over which a knight's cloak had been spread. Two attendants of her own sex, fanned her by turns. Her closed lids could not conceal the extraordinary beauty of her countenance, but rather brightened it, by increasing its apparent innocence. As she slumbered, the light muslin dress, which covered her swelling bust, rose and fell with the palpitations beneath; while occasionally a slight blush suffused her cheek, and she murmured incoherent words as if dreaming.

Somewhat to the right of the sleeper, and detached from the main group, two knights stood, apparently guarding the couch of the maiden. One was a man advanced in years, and marked by many a scar: the other was still in the bloom of youth. This last was leaning on his huge cross-hilted sword, with eyes fixed on the group of females, and apparently in deep reverie.

"A ducat for your thoughts, Sir Richard," suddenly said his companion. "You have kept silence for this half hour, and in that time ought to have concluded much. Have you determined whether we shall reach the camp in safety? Or was something else the subject of your reflections?"

The young knight, who was thus addressed, looked up and said, with a deep sigh,

"I was not thinking, Sir Claude, of the perils of our journey. Were I to have my wish, it would be, as you know, that this journey might last forever."

"I fancied you were thinking of the Lady Blanche, when I spoke," replied the older knight, "and as I knew it could do no good, I thought it better to disturb your reverie. In good faith, my lad, this falling in love with one so much above you won't do. Count Fontrevault would never have allowed you to accompany me, in bringing home his daughter, if he had imagined it would lead to this. As leader of the expedition, indeed, I shall feel it my duty to detach you to the rear, if I find you riding so much at the bridle-rein of the Lady Blanche."

The young knight blushed, and was silent with embarrassment; but, after a moment, he replied,

"Ah, uncle," for such was the relation of the old knight to himself, "it is easy to advise, but it is hard to obey. I can no more help loving the Lady Blanche than I can the stars of heaven."

"And yet she is just as unattainable as they," sententiously remarked the uncle.

"I know it," sadly replied the nephew. "I know I love against hope. One so exalted, beautiful and pure as she cannot be expected to do more than bestow a smile occasionally on a landless knight like myself. It is a dream, I know; but it is a sweet one while it lasts; and I would fain have it last till this journey is over, when farewell forever to happiness."

"Tush, tush, you talk like a silly boy," replied the old knight. "Once get to blows again with the Saracen, and now that the truce is over this will soon happen, and, my word for it, you'll think no more of the Lady Blanche. Good, hard knocks, in downright battle, are a sovereign cure for love-sickness."

"Oh! if I could do but some great deed," said

the nephew, as if continuing a train of thought rather than replying to his uncle, "it might not be so hopeless. My lineage is as pure as hers: it is only fame I want."

"Rather say wealth, my lad," interrupted his relative. "Gold goes before glory in these degenerate times. For knightly renown you have enough, considering your youth; the whole Christian army cannot, indeed, produce your equal in this respect. You do honor to our blood, my boy. But, like your ancestors for many generations, you are braver than rich; and if you would not be laughed at, by your mistress herself, don't be so silly as to aspire to the hand of an heiress. I know something of the world. But see, the Lady Blanche awakes."

As he spoke, the fair sleeper rose from her pillow, and looking around met the eyes of uncle and nephew. She smiled and beckoned them toward her.

"Is it not time we resumed our march, Sir Claude?" she said. "The sun is wheeling to the west, I see. You have allowed me to sleep too long, I fear."

"I knew your ladyship must be tired," replied the old knight, "and, as we have far to ride, I thought I would give you as long as possible to refresh yourself."

"Do you intend," said the Lady Blanche, "to push on to the camp, to-night?"

"Such is my design. The truce is over, as you know; and the land is alive with the Saracen hornets. Your father will be uneasy till he sees you."

"I believe," said the fair girl, laughing, "that you will never forgive me, for making you wait a day at Antioch. Do you think, Sir Richard, that he will?" And, as she spoke, she turned, with a sudden lighting up of the countenance that was inexpressibly beautiful, to the young knight.

The latter blushed as he answered. "There would have been less peril, had we started at once; for then we should have reached the camp before the truce was over. However, fear nothing, for all of us, as you know, would die rather than see you come to harm."

The Lady Blanche blushed, too, at these words, and her fine eyes fell before the gaze of the young knight. She looked on the ground, and playing with the tassel of her dress, said, in a low voice, not entirely without emotion,

"I believe it, sir knights: and I shall never forget your devotion. But time presses," she added, immediately, in a more natural voice, "and so let us proceed with our journey."

In a little while, accordingly, the cavalcade was in motion. A party of men-at-arms rode first to be on the look out; then followed the Lady Blanche with her attendants, accompanied by Sir

Claude; while the rear was brought up, at a suitable distance, by the nephew, who, with a second party of men-at-arms, guarded the precious treasure from secret assault in that direction.

Gloomy and hopeless were the feelings of Sir Richard as he rode silently after the Lady Blanche. The conversation of his uncle had recalled him from dreams to realities. The vain hopes, founded on an occasional smile, with which he had buoyed himself up, vanished as he reviewed the difference in wealth and station between himself and her; and he would have longed, in his despair, for a Saracen host to appear, in order that he might die for her, and so end his despondency, but for her captivity, which would be certain to follow.

Night fell while the travellers had still a considerable distance before them. Sir Claude had been growing more and more uneasy, for he knew that, if they did not reach the camp that night, there would be great doubt if they would ever attain it: and now, just when the necessity arose for making greater speed than ever, what was his dismay to find that the three palfreys, which the females rode, showed signs of giving out.

"I see your anxiety, Sir Claude," said the Lady Blanche, "and I censure myself severely for having caused it, by my delay at Antioch. But alas! I cannot go faster. My poor beast, indeed, is worn down already, and much I fear he will soon refuse to go at all. Cannot we find some secure place to encamp hereabouts?"

"If your ladyship," said the old knight, hesitatingly, "will commit yourself to my care, I think the journey can yet be performed to night. My steed is, as you see, very powerful, and can easily bear two. Abandon your palfrey and accept a seat on my saddle. Your handmaidens can ride with two of my best mounted men-at-arms. In this way we can gallop to camp before two hours."

Had the proposition been made, to ride in this way with the handsome nephew of the commander, the Lady Blanche, however much she might have preferred it, would most certainly have declined; but now she signified, with alacrity, and without embarrassment, her willingness to follow Sir Claude's suggestion.

Accordingly this new disposition was speedily made, and the cavalcade once more resumed its march, the three palfreys being abandoned on the mountain side.

Scarcely, however, had the young knight, who still kept the rear, ridden a hundred yards away from the deserted beasts, when he heard a hurried clatter of hoofs behind him, and, looking back through the twilight, beheld the lately tired animals madly galloping after him.

"This is strange," he said, reining in his

steed, and addressing his squire. "What can it mean?"

He had scarcely spoken, however, when a low, deep growl was heard, as if from some infuriated animal, and immediately after a dark body was seen, flying, as it were, through the air by successive leaps, in pursuit of the terrified horses.

"Holy Virgin," cried the squire, "the lions, the lions."

At that day, and to Europeans, the lion was even more terrific than at present, for fire arms had not been invented, and to encounter him was almost certain death. Thus the young knight's squire, who would have faced a horde of Saracens without fear, uttered these words in a voice of terror indescribable.

"Ay, it is not one only, but a whole troop," cried Sir Richard, "they are roaring all around us. Hark! what cry was that?" For, as he spoke, a shriek as of a woman shot out of the twilight ahead, in whose gloom Sir Claude and the rest of the cavalcade had just disappeared. "God of heaven, can it be the Lady Blanche?"

With the words, he plunged his rowels into the sides of his steed, who darted forward madly, snorting with terror as well as with pain, for the whole mountain side was now seemingly alive with lions, answering each other in prolonged roars. The men-at-arms attempted to follow him, but all could not succeed, for many of the horses had become unmanageable through fright, and were rearing wildly, resisting every effort of their riders to force them forward. Sir Richard's steed was equally alarmed, for the sweat rolled in torrents from his sides, but the strong hand and prompt heel of the young knight kept the animal more under control.

It seemed an age while the young knight, at full gallop, was clearing the space between himself and those in advance. A thousand terrible fancies passed through his mind in that interval. In imagination he saw the Lady Blanche mangled in a lion's jaws, and at the horrible spectacle, he shook with convulsive agony.

But his worst fears were scarcely exceeded by the reality, for when, on turning an angle in the mountain road, he caught sight of the Lady Blanche, it was to behold her protected only by his uncle's body from a lion of the most colossal size. The savage beast had leaped on the haunches of Sir Claude's horse, fixing one claw in the old knight's shoulder, and the other in the spine of the steed. The Lady Blanche, as if conscious that the hour of her death was at hand, had raised her face to heaven; and Sir Richard, half unnerved as he was, yet noticed that there was less of terror than of earnest prayer in that lovely countenance.

No one else was nigh. The stout men-at-arms,

who would have gathered around their mistress in battle, and died encircling her, had all fled, panic-struck by the attack of this unaccustomed foe.

"The cravens," said Sir Richard, bitterly, speaking to himself. "Could they not learn a lesson from her heavenly courage? Ho, there, Sir Claude," he cried, shouting at the top of his lungs, "hold on, for an instant longer, and I will be with you." And, as he spoke, he drew his huge cross-hilted sword, and rising in his stirrups, dashed at the lion.

The uncle glanced over his shoulder, and recognizing his nephew, bade him, with a look, to come on.

All this, which we have taken so long to narrate, did not occupy a moment in happening. From the time when Sir Richard heard the shriek till he reached the side of the Lady Blanche, scarcely a minute had elapsed; while from the time he saw her peril till he rushed at the lion, not twenty seconds passed.

"Ride on, save the Lady Blanche, I will deal with this monster," he cried, as he struck, with all his force, a blow at the lion, who, feeling the smart of the sword, instantly relaxed his hold, and turned to attack his assailant. "If I perish, pray for my soul."

He looked at the Lady Blanche as he spoke, his whole heart beaming in his eyes. In that moment of weakness his secret escaped. The Lady Blanche saw that he loved her.

But she made him no direct reply. Pale as ashes she turned to Sir Claude.

"Stay," she cried, breathlessly, "and, if able, help him! I will take care of myself."

And with heroic self-possession, before Sir Claude could divine her purpose, she had released herself from his hold and glided to the ground, where, shrinking close to the mountain side, she waited the termination of the appalling strife, with pulseless heart and suspended respiration.

We have said that the lion, when attacked by Sir Richard, turned fiercely on his assailant. One blow of his huge paw would have been sufficient to finish the combat, so great was the strength imparted by his fury, but this blow the young knight dexterously evaded, by suddenly spurring his steed, so that the lion, instead of alighting on Sir Richard, fell at the feet of the horse, who, partly in terror, partly under the bit, kicked out furiously and sent the huge beast rolling over roaring on his side. Before the lion could recover himself entirely, the young knight had wheeled his steed and dealt the monster another blow. But this second wound, like the first, instead of despatching the huge beast, only maddened him more; and Sir Richard, in spite of

skill, strength, and heroism, and heroic courage, would have been worsted, but for the interposition of his uncle, whom the timely self-possession of the Lady Blanche had left free to assist in the combat, and who, though grievously wounded by the paw of the lion, was yet able to wield a sword with right good will.

The monster, attacked by Sir Claude, just as he was about to spring on the young knight for the second time, was bewildered, and turned, with a sullen roar, on his new enemy. But it was only to receive a fourth, and more terrible wound from Sir Richard, on whom he now wheeled finally with all the savage ferocity of despair. Just as he was about to spring, however, Sir Claude, who had leaped from his horse on purpose, dexterously drew his blade across the hamstrings of the monster, who, paralyzed suddenly, rolled over in the dust, roaring with futile rage and biting furiously at the air.

"That deed was worth a kingdom," cried Sir Richard, as he beheld the lion thus rendered harmless, "you have saved all our lives. Let me now give the *coup de grace*." And, as he spoke, he drew near the wounded animal, and, with two or three quick thrusts of his sword, finally despatched him.

"Nay," interrupted Sir Claude, "but for you, the Lady Blanche and I had been both dead ere this."

The young knight made no answer, but turned toward the Lady Blanche herself, who, seeing that the contest was over, came forward, with both hands extended, her countenance radiant with gratitude, to thank her deliverer. If, when Sir Richard thought death inevitable, he had unguardedly betrayed the secret of his heart, not the less did the Lady Blanche, in this exciting moment, prove traitor to the secret of hers. The love, which had sprung up in her bosom for the heroic, chivalrous and handsome young knight, when they first became acquainted, and which had widened and deepened during the constant

companionship of the last few days, now overflowed every consideration of maiden coyness and feminine reserve, and poured forth in looks, gestures, and half articulated words, under the agitation and joy of the moment.

It was only for an instant, however, that this scene, which made the young knight overpoweringly happy, lasted; for, with the first revulsion from excitement, the natural timidity and embarrassment of her sex returned to the Lady Blanche. Recalling the peril she had escaped, as well as the virgin secret she had unintentionally confessed, she sank fainting, and would have fallen, had not Sir Richard caught her in his arms.

She did not, however, remain unconscious long. The ardent embraces of her lover would have recalled her to herself, had her sorrow been even more complete.

The rest of the cavalcade soon came up, and the travellers were again in motion. The danger just escaped was the theme of all. Yet, strange to say, neither the Lady Blanche nor Sir Richard very much regretted that the peril had occurred, perhaps because it had revealed to each other sentiments, which honor on one side, and maiden delicacy on the other, would else have kept concealed forever.

Our tale is over. Sir Claude never entirely recovered from his wounds, though he lived for several years: but before he died, he saw his nephew married to the Lady Blanche. Gratitude for saving his daughter's life, overcame every scruple on the part of the count to receiving the landless Sir Richard for a son-in-law. Nor is this all. The young knight soon became a great favorite with the count, and eventually his heir.

In one of the proudest castles of the south of France, the descendants of the Lady Blanche and the young knight, long dwelt; and though that proud line is now extinct, and the castle itself a ruin, the peasantry of the district still preserve this legend of THE ATTACK.

THE FATAL NECKLACE.

BY E. W. DEWEES.

For some time after Isabella and Ferdinand had been crowned king and queen of Castile, their path was beset with many troubles and difficulties. A powerful party, headed by King Alphonso, of Portugal, supported the claims of the Princess Joanna to her father's crown. Ferdinand had, indeed, defeated Alphonso at Toro, but many great nobles were still disaffected, and it required all the address of the two wise young sovereigns to prevent another civil outbreak. As one of the most effectual means of cementing permanent peace and union between the hostile parties, the king and queen endeavored to promote such marriages as would conduce to this end. Many dangerous opponents were thus gained over to their side, but one powerful young noble still obstinately persisted in his opposition. It was the proud Marquis de Villena, whose power and resources were so great, that it was manifestly of advantage, almost of necessity, to conciliate him. To do so, King Ferdinand wished to offer the hand of his friend, Don Roderick de Cambrá, to the Marquis de Villena's sister in marriage.

Don Roderick was accounted the most courtly gentleman, and the bravest knight among Ferdinand's adherents; the affection of brothers subsisted between him and the king. His rank, his accomplishments, his renown distinguished him among the nobles: he alone might, with hope of success, aspire to the hand of the sister of the haughty young marquis. The Donna Inez was a lady of exquisite beauty—rich—high-born, and of a noble, exalted character. Nothing, apparently, could be more to Don Roderick's advantage than a connection with one so highly endowed by nature and fortune; but unhappily his affections had been already bestowed elsewhere. He, therefore, resisted Ferdinand's importunities, and the queen's entreaties, till the preparations which the marquis began to make for a new insurrection, convinced him that another civil war could only be avoided by the renunciation of his dearest wishes.

Don Roderick's love for his country and sovereigns prevailed; he consented to make on the altar of duty the most painful sacrifice a man *can* make—that of his first love for woman. The only thing that alleviated the anguish such a decision cost him, was the knowledge that no words of love had ever been exchanged between him and the object of his passion—the Donna

Christina. He hoped—he trusted the suffering would be his alone.

Don Roderick's proffered hand was accepted by the Marquis de Villena for his sister, and a reconciliation effected between the antagonistic parties. The betrothal took place immediately, and it was arranged that the marriage should follow speedily.

Don Roderick had had some previous acquaintance with his future bride. He admired her loveliness, he revered her noble character, and it was impossible for even his preoccupied heart not to yield to a certain tenderness for her, as pale and greatly agitated she plighted him a hand which Don Roderick doubted not was as unwillingly given as his own.

And how was it meanwhile with Donna Christina, the dark, handsome lady whom Don Roderick loved? When the tidings of his betrothal reached her, she fell into a death-like trance. Throughout the night afterward, she paced her chamber with frantic gestures, and when morning came she despatched a messenger to Don Roderick, desiring him to come to her.

Don Roderick immediately obeyed the summons. As he entered the apartment where Christina waited alone to receive him, she advanced hurriedly to meet him, and said, in a quick, passion-choked voice—

"Signor! signor! what do I hear of you? I know not if I have a right to say so—but sooner had I thought to hear of your death than the hated tidings that reached me yesterday. I know well that word of love has never passed between us, and yet—alas that I should make so unwomanly an avowal—and yet—I fancied that you loved me, signor—loved me as I love you!" and she would have thrown herself at Don Roderick's feet had he not caught her in his arms.

For a time Don Roderick attempted no reply. He was content to fold in his close embrace the woman he loved, and Donna Christina too thought only of the present. But soon withdrawing herself from him, she said—

"I know not by what right, signor, you give, or I receive these carresses. I pray you, sir, end my doubts—tell me if what I have heard of you be true."

"It is true," said Don Roderick, sadly, and he explained to her the weighty reasons which had compelled him to renounce his fondest wishes.

He told her how well—how passionately he loved her, but how he had hoped, for her sake, that her heart might be cold to him. He tried to incite her to the same pitch of self-devotion, which had enabled him to make so great a sacrifice for his country.

But Donna Christina's patriotism would not carry her so far. She only felt that she loved, and that she would sooner give up country, friends, life—the whole world than the man she adored. She told him so—she wept on his bosom—but even her tears, though they caused Don Roderick the most poignant suffering, could not alter his determination. His soul had already passed through the fiery ordeal—his sacrifice had been tendered and accepted—it was too late to recede with honor, even for the sake of the happiness of one so dear.

The lovers parted—love and sorrow in his heart—in hers love and anger. It was arranged that they should meet once more, on the night before the bridal, to take a last farewell of each other ere separated forever.

Meanwhile the preparations for the marriage proceeded. Never was there a more wretched man than the envied Don Roderick, about to wed the beautiful, much-coveted heiress, Donna Inez. But alas! with riches and "honors thick upon him," assured of the passionate love of the woman he adored, she upon whom he was about to bestow his hand, was, however lovely, a stranger to his heart.

Don Roderick sought the society of his betrothed as little as etiquette would permit—his thoughts were elsewhere. Had it been otherwise, he could not have failed to be won by the tender dignity of the beautiful woman whom he was about to wed.

The day appointed for the marriage quickly approached. The night preceding it, Don Roderick visited Christina according to promise.

It was a scene of terrible suffering to them both. In vain did Don Roderick, who had nerved himself for the trial, attempt the sooth the beautiful woman who wept passionately in his arms. She repeated wildly expressions of her boundless love for him, and refused to be comforted.

"Who is this Donna Inez," she said, often, "that she should step between thee and me? Am I not as young, as handsome, as well-born as she?—as fit to be thy bride?—do we not love each other? Why then should she snatch the cup of bliss from my lips? But I have seen my rival," she continued, wildly—"I *wished* to see my enemy, and I foresee how it will be—she is gentle and beautiful—she will steal your heart as well as your hand from me. Oh, would that either she or I were dead! The world should not hold us both—it is not wide enough," and

she repeated with flashing eyes—"I would that either she or I were dead!"

Don Roderick excused the unhappy woman's violence, and soothed and comforted her as well as he could. He took a sad farewell of the idol of his soul, saying that after the vows of the morrow, he dared not trust himself in her too dangerous presence. He besought her to strengthen him and herself on the stern performance of their duty.

At parting Donna Christina placed a casket in his hands, saying—

"I pray you present your fair bride with the wedding gift I have prepared for her." And pale and trembling she saw the man she loved depart from her to wed another.

On the morrow there were gay revels in Madrid. Amid great pomp and gorgeous pageantry, the noble Don Roderick was wedded to the high-born Donna Inez. All the world gazed admiring at the handsome man and beautiful woman who plighted their faith to each other. All pronounced it a fitting match; for Don Roderick was the soul of honor, and Donna Inez of exalted virtue. If the bridegroom looked sad and stern, men knew that it was not his wont to let his mood be written on his face—and the timid tremblings—the blushes of the bride seemed to prove that her heart at least was not cold.

On the bridal night a gay company was assembled at the palace of the bride's brother. Dance and song, and luxurious cheer lent their aid to pleasure. Proud knights and brilliant ladies paced the marble floors; but who shall describe the beauty of the fair bride, who received with a touching and sad grace the homage all tendered her. Her spotless bridal robes fell in rich folds around her faultless form, and on her lovely neck was a necklace of pearls—the gift of Donna Christina.

But while the revelry was at its height, and gay feet were keeping time to sweet music—a wild scream, as of one in pain, rang through the apartment, and Donna Inez fell lifeless on the floor. Friends hastened to her aid. Her hand had grasped the necklace as though she would tear it from her neck—and that her breathing might not be impeded, it was removed. Donna Inez soon revived—the necklace was replaced at her request, and the festivities continued, but throughout the evening the death-like pallor did not leave her cheek.

Donna Inez assumed the new dignities of her station, as the head of Don Roderick's house, with a grace peculiarly her own. Her deportment too to her husband was perfect. Modesty and tenderness were equally mingled in her bearing.

Don Roderick, for his part, treated his wife with the courtesy and consideration due to her exalted

character; he felt, too, the most sincere pity for her—lamenting that one so perfectly lovely, and worthy of being warmly loved, should be bestowed on a husband who had no heart to be touched by her charms.

Since his marriage, Don Roderick had scrupulously refrained from seeking Donna Christina's society. Duty—honor bade him forbear her dangerous company. When, however, several weeks afterward she sent for him, he hesitated not to go to her, thinking she had something of importance to say to him. Not so—the unhappy lady had merely been unable longer to endure his absence. She deplored her hard fate, and would have renewed the passionate scene of their last interview; but Don Roderick's high sense of honor made him shrink now from the bold expressions of love which burst from her lips. He was gentle, tender with her, as befitting to one so unhappy—unhappy too for his sake; but when, piqued by his coldness and incited by jealousy, she descended to abuse and calumniate his wife's pure character, he felt contempt taking place of the love and reverence he had once felt for her. Don Roderick defended his wife as justice demanded from these jealous aspersions, and they parted in anger and coldness.

Thus disappointed in the character of the woman of his choice, Don Roderick began internally to contrast her qualities with those of the gentle being to whom fortune had, against his wishes, united him in marriage. It was impossible but that the latter should gain by the comparison; his estimation of her noble mind, her womanly tenderness, increased with every hour that he spent in her society. He could not but feel her superior worth.

Since Don Roderick's marriage Donna Christina had shut herself from the world, that she might indulge her grief and jealousy undisturbed; now, however—perhaps in the hope of sometimes meeting him she loved—she began again to mingle in gay society. Don Roderick saw her often, but alas! each time they met she fell in his opinion. Her violence, her boldness—her want of principle disgusted him.

Meanwhile the health of Donna Inez began visibly to decline. The bloom had in fact never returned to her cheek since the wedding night, when she had fainted in the midst of the festivities; but now she was evidently ill: every day her looks became less earthly—more spiritual—more heavenly. Don Roderick became really alarmed about her. He called in medical advice and wished her to travel, offering himself to accompany her. But Donna Inez only smiled sadly and shook her head, saying it would be of no use—she was better where she was. Still she continued to droop. Her husband watched and tended her with the

solicitous care of a brother for a loved and honored sister. She received these attentions with evident pleasure and gratitude. Sometimes when he was not looking at her, her eyes would rest upon him with an expression of sad, self-devoted tenderness, as though she had made—or was about to make some great sacrifice for his sake. At such times his heart seemed almost overflowing with love, yet with a touching dignity she repressed all outward expression of it. Every one knows how watching an invalid softens the heart, how tender of—how fond we become of the object of solicitude. So Don Roderick found it. He felt that the death of Donna Inez would be the greatest affliction that could befall him.

It chanced that about this time, when the news of the illness of Donna Inez had spread far and wide, that Don Roderick happened to meet Donna Christina in the street. She stopped him, and said, in a strange mocking tone,

"Report has informed me, signor, of the illness of your lady-wife, but I would learn from yourself if her case be as dangerous as rumor says."

"Donna Inez is indeed very seriously indisposed," answered Don Roderick, gravely, "but I trust she may yet be restored to perfect health."

Donna Christina laughed bitterly, and then said in a constrained voice, and with a hesitation not natural to her, "I pray you, signor, doth your fair bride often wear the poor pearls I sent her for a wedding gift?"

"I know not," answered Don Roderick, shortly, and passed on, for there was something in the tone of her voice that grated discordantly on his ear.

At the moment he had given but little heed to Donna Christina's question, but as he walked homeward it recurred to his mind. It struck him as strange—why this anxiety about a trifle at such a time? why concern herself about a sick lady's ornaments? her own gift too. He remembered the illness of Donna Inez on the only time he had seen her wear the pearls—on the bridal night, and a horrible suspicion crossed his mind. He hastened home in the greatest excitement, and entering the room where his wife lay resting on a couch, he cried almost breathless,

"For heaven's sake, Inez, where are the pearls that Donna Christina sent you for a wedding gift?"

Donna Inez lifted the scarf that veiled her beautiful neck, and pointed to them.

"Remove them! remove them instantly!" grasped Don Roderick, growing pale as death—"remove them as you value your life!"

"Nay," said Inez, gently and calmly, "it would be too late. Let them rest where they are now, and be buried with me when I die."

But Don Roderick would himself have torn

them from her neck, had not his wife stayed his hand.

"It would be useless," she said, "to remove this necklace—its work is done, and see—here is another, which not all your endeavors could displace;" and raising the pearls she showed another necklace, painted, as it were, on her pure skin; each poisoned pearl had left its shadow.

Donna Inez saw her husband's look of horror and despair at the sight, and said soothingly,

"Blame not yourself or another, my husband, for *my* act. I have known that these pearls were poisoned ever since the first time I wore them, yet they have never been removed since that hour. I saw how it was with you—that you loved another. I perceived how love and jealousy had compelled an unhappy woman to a fearful means of ridding herself of her rival. From my heart I forgive her—I accepted her gift. I pitied her—I pitied you. A hopeless passion which I myself cherished made me wish for death, and taught me to feel for—to be lenient to you both—to wish to make you happy."

A jealous pang shot through Don Roderick's heart even in that sad hour.

"You loved another then?" he said.

"I never loved but one," Donna Inez replied, suppressing her emotion—"never but one—and you are he!"

Her husband clasped her weeping to his heart.

"Live then, dearest, noblest wife, for my sake!" he cried, almost beside himself with grief and horror. "Believe me when I declare to you that never, even in the hours of my warmest passion for Donna Christina, did I ever love her so deeply, so truly as I now love you. Henceforth she is loathsome to my soul. You—you alone, pure and spotless angel, possess my unworthy heart!"

Donna Inez trembled with emotion.

"I never thought to be so happy in this world," she said, as she lay folded in her husband's embrace.

"Do not speak then of dying," said Don Roderick—"we shall yet be happy—live to let a life of love and devotion atone for what you have suffered!"

"It cannot be," Inez replied, sadly, "my moments are already numbered; but a few more, and I shall live no longer, except in your memory, where I would be cherished tenderly—awakening no stern or bitter thoughts to any. And be not troubled for my fate, my beloved; my lot has been fortunate beyond my hopes. I thought to die unknown, unloved, and unlamented—even so I accounted myself happy, since it was for your sake. But now, thus—thus folded in your arms—sustained by your love, 'tis bliss to die."

THE GRASS SOWERS.

BY JANE F. STAFFORD.

THREE girls were met together by what appeared to be a new-made grave. They were sisters; and were just about that age when the vague fancies of children begin to be mingled with the more rational awe and wonder which belong to the dawning soul of womanhood. Gathered together, as they now were, amidst those hillocks of green mould which death raises and Time sweeps away, it was little marvel that the thoughts of the three should alike turn upon the mysteries of the grave.

Mary, the eldest and palest of the group, was the first to speak.

"How is it," she asked, "that on this grave alone the grass never grows? Some of those around us are bright as an emerald sea; some again are slow in their growth of verdure, showing here and there green spots like fields over which the cloud-shadows are passing. Here alone all remains dry and bare, as if parched by a fiercer sun than that which warms all the other graves."

She was answered by Anna, who spoke slowly, like one whose breath comes and goes with an uneasy and difficult respiration.

"Whatever be the cause, there is something strangely unnatural in the look of it. I think I could not sleep at rest under such cold ungenial earth; I should like, with poor Keats, to '*feel the daisies growing over me.*'"

Lucy, the youngest of the three, who, with clear transparent face, had remained bending silently over the barren sod, now took a hand of each of her sisters in her own, and addressed them in a low, soft voice.

"Listen, dear sisters," she said, "while I tell you of a singular dream that fell upon me, one summer night here among the graves. A dream it must have been, although at the time it impressed me with all the force of a strange and wild reality. I lay, my head resting upon this very sod, so barren in the midst of the verdant sepulchres around; when, sinking I must suppose into a deep slumber, I fancied I saw several figures, with faces downcast and meek, walking round and round another grave not far distant from this on which I was resting. Stiffing the awe which oppressed me, I asked of the spirits, for so they seemed, what was their office—what their meaning—in thus pacing restlessly where all else reposed in the stillness of death. To my

question the foremost spirit replied, as near as my memory serves, in the following words:—

"We are the grass-sowers. It is 'appointed that those who have been peace-makers in their day of mortality shall, when their work on earth is done, sow the green blades which brighten the else barren sepulchres of the just.'

"'But why,' again I questioned, 'why, then, is yonder grave, round which you tread so constantly, still but partially grown with grass? I see but a few spots here and there, while the dull black mould overspreads all between.'

"'We do but sow; our office ends there,' answered again the spirit-leader of the mystic band. 'It is through the medium of others that the seeds must fructify. This grave, over which we cast the seed nightly, is a type of one and all. Here sleeps one of the injured and oppressed of the earth. Her oppressor alone can brighten the sod beneath which she rests. It is the pity—the remorse—the tears of the wrong-doer only, that can make this arid soil blossom as the field. Behold! already a few verdant spots appear. She lies here, cold and stark;—he lives on, in the midst of the upper world's enjoyments—such as they are. But at nightfall, the thought of this buried one comes back upon his soul; and then, when dews descend from heaven to brighten other pastures of the living, tears fall from the eyes of the oppressor, to make green the turf of the dead. Such feelings of remorse are few and far between; and, behold! so are the spots of verdure here.'

"The spirit ceased. But my heart was full; and again I inquired, 'but this grave, whereon I have laid myself—tell me, unearthly being, if you can, wherefore all here is barren as the parched desert. Not one blade is growing—not a single spot of green is to be seen here.'

"'That grave we have sown in vain,' was the answer. 'It is the last resting-place of one who left it not in the power of others to injure him:—he was ever the injurer. His sod must remain black as the night of the grave which has overtaken him—even till the day of doom.'

"'And then?'—I gasped, breathlessly.

"'Behold that star on high,' replied the spirit. 'A moment more, and yonder cloud which is riding the blue scope of heaven, will pass over and shroud it from your mortal gaze. But though you shall see it not, you will know that a radiance and a glory dwells behind the rolling vapor. So

is it with the things beyond the tomb. Question no more. Too much is your knowledge, even now, for one who walks the earth, living.'

"With that, I thought the spirit beckoned me, as it faded away into the distance, indistinct and vapory as the cloud which now darkened all above and around me;—and I awoke."

Lucy's dream was told. There was little in it that words could deal with;—it was beyond them. The three passed homeward; very silently—for they trod among the graves.

In due time—for none suspected that each bore the arrow of death within her breast—in due time the sisters, pale-browed Mary, and Anna with the quickened breath, and Lucy, through whose clear cheek the blood shone too brightly, each found a new home—in a husband's house.

But the sepulchres of earth must be filled. And

that very soft undulating sweep of ground where the silver-leaved willows trailed their boughs, and where the three had so often walked with interlacing arms, became in three succeeding springs the happy resting-place of the sisters.

Over the sods that bound the fairer Mary and Anna, soft patches of emerald sprung up in time. But Lucy's was a grave wherein so much of the soul's beauty slept, that her passing away was a thing to pierce at once the heart that had wronged her, with an arrow sharper than that of death.

After one short summer night, the labor of the grass-sowers was needless. She was laid down in the twilight; and at daybreak her grave was green. Whether fresh turfs of budding grasses had been cut by human hands beneath the moon; or whether the spirit-sowers had done the work—who shall say?

THE HAPPY FAMILY.

BY JANE WEAVER.

"How I wish we lived in town, Harry," said Mrs. Morton, to her husband.

The young couple had come to New York, on a visit to Mr. Morton's elder brother; and had just been shown to their chamber, in one of the most magnificent mansions that existed in 1837, which was the period of which we write.

"James had no more money than you," she resumed, "when he moved to town, yet see how superbly he lives. Why don't you sell your farm too?"

"Because, my dear," promptly answered the husband, "I value contentment more than display. If having enough for one's wants constitutes wealth, I am a richer man than James. Our farm gives us plenty to eat, and something for luxuries. What more do we need? And we are free from care, with all this, which, I fear, James is not."

Mrs. Morton gave a sigh, but said no more, for she had unbounded confidence in her husband's wisdom. She dreamed all night, however, of the pictures, Paris furniture, and liveried servants of her brother-in-law.

The next day her hostess took her, in the carriage, to call on some friends, and as she rolled along in the luxurious equipage, she was more in love than ever with a town life.

But, at dinner, she was surprised to find that they were to sit down without waiting for the master of the mansion.

"Don't you wait for James, sister?" she said, in some surprise.

"Oh, no," answered the hostess, "for he is often detained, especially since money has been so scarce."

Mrs. Henry Morton gave an affectionate glance at her husband, for she had never dined without him since their marriage, and could not have done it indeed; and he returned the look as lovingly: then the meal went on.

It was quite dusk when the master of the house came in. He looked jaded, and care-worn; and threw himself immediately into a fauteuil. His wife regarded him anxiously.

"Order tea as soon as you can, my love," he said, "for I am nearly exhausted, and a cup of good Imperial will revive me, I hope."

"You seem to be worn down with business, brother," said Mr. Henry Morton: and, with a smile, he added, "I suppose you are fast becoming a millionaire."

The elder brother gave a quick glance around the superb apartment, as if to assure himself that there were no eaves-droppers, and replied,

"I wish, Henry, I had the old fields again, and had never seen Pearl street. This sort of life makes a man prematurely old. Since the hard times came on I have sometimes almost wished myself dead. I don't know who to trust, for I daily lose in some new quarter; I get but few remittances; and often, when I rise in the morning, I can't tell where the money is to come from to pay my notes that day. A millionaire!" And he gave a bitter laugh.

Henry looked at him with compassion, for a moment, and then answered,

"Why don't you close your business and come back to old Dutchess county? We'll find a farm for you somewhere near the old homestead."

But the elder brother answered with an incredulous shake of the head.

"It's too late now, Henry. I have got accustomed, and so has Mary to the luxury of a town life; and I could never live in the plain way I once did. What were superfluities to me, when I farmed the old homestead, have become necessities now. And besides," he added, cheerfully, "this pressure cannot last forever; and, when it is over, I shall soon make up my losses."

"But why not retrench, meantime?"

"You are no business man, Henry," said the

elder brother, with a smile, "or you would not have asked that question. If I were to sell my house, or even give up my carriage, my credit would go immediately; and then I could not hold out for a week. To be a merchant, in these times," he continued, with sudden energy, "is like being a rat in a trap: you can't get out, yet are almost certain to perish if you don't. However, there are hundreds in the same scrape," he added, as the tea-bell rang, "if that is any consolation."

That night, when they were once more alone, Mrs. Morton said,

"I see, Henry, that you were right. All this splendor is dearly paid for. Sister had a hearty cry, when we went to her chamber after tea. She says the hard times are killing James, and that, she fears, he must fail, unless the pressure abates."

"And a year ago, when we were married, he told me he was worth two hundred thousand dollars."

"He has lost more than the half of that already, this year, Mary says; and it is impossible to tell where the failures will stop."

The young couple remained a week longer in New York, and then returned home. Henry, indeed, would have staid to help and comfort his brother, but he found that he could do nothing in this way: and James was so engrossed that he had no leisure to spare for social pleasures.

They had been home but a few months, and were rejoicing over the birth of their first born, when a letter arrived from New York that damped all their joy, for the time. The elder brother had failed, and committed suicide; his wife had, in consequence, been prematurely confined; and her life, it was said, was despaired of.

The Mortons hurried immediately to New York, but arrived only in time to see the husband, wife and child buried in the same grave. A little girl, about two years old, remained: but not a dollar was left of her father's former fortune. They took the orphan home with them, resolving to raise her as their own child.

"Poor James," said Henry, "was, as I suspected, out of his mind when he committed suicide; and had been, indeed, from the hour when he found that ruin was inevitable. He was always sensitive, and anxiety had preyed on his nervous system till that sensitiveness became morbid; and, in a state of phrenzy, he committed the fatal deed. May God, who is merciful, pardon him!"

One day, months after this, the husband and wife sat in their favorite nook, under a spreading tree, by the side of a babbling brook that ran through one of their fields. Their adopted daughter was playing, with their own sweet infant, on the grass at their feet. The husband had been reading, but he stopped after awhile, and turning to his wife, said,

"This day, a year ago, we visited poor James. What changes since then!"

The wife's countenance grew sad, as she looked up from the children, and fixed her gaze thoughtfully on vacancy.

"Alas!" she said, at last, "and I, for a time, envied Mary." Then the tears came into her eyes, and she leaned her head on her husband's shoulder, saying, "but you were right, and I was wrong. Give me the humble contentment of the country, rather than the showy life of the town with its anxieties and often ruin."

And you would have said the same reader, if you had seen that **HAPPY FAMILY**.

THE LIVING PORTRAIT.

BY J. T. TROWBRIDGE.

ALTHOUGH I had enjoyed but a brief acquaintance with the capricious yet worthy Albert Dinsmore, I had conceived for him a deep and lasting attachment; and when the intelligence came to me, of his dangerous illness, I experienced a painful shock. I flew to his house. A servant told me in a whisper that no visitor could be admitted. Dinsmore, it was thought, was dying.

For three days I waited anxiously for a change in the malady of my friend. All this time he was sinking—sinking—sinking into the Lethe of death. On the fourth day the news came that he was no worse; on the fifth, that there was a slight change for the better; on the sixth, that there was an unexpected improvement; and on the seventh, that Dinsmore had so far recovered, that his physician no longer objected to the visits of a few friends.

I hastened to Albert's bedside. To my astonishment, I found him sitting up in bed, looking pale indeed, but so perfectly contented and happy, that I could scarcely realize that he had lately been at the point of death.

"Ah! my friend! I am glad you have come!" he said, with a calm smile, as I pressed his feeble hand. "I was just wishing to see you. Sit down—here, close to my side. I have something for your ear—a singular incident, which I dare confide to you alone. You sympathize with me; and although you may be incredulous, you cannot laugh, as the world would laugh, at what I am anxious to tell you."

"My dear friend," I replied, "I believe we understand each other. Proceed without restraint; and, as for my incredulity, rest assured that I shall feel bound to put faith in a motive you know to be truth."

"No! no! I cannot expect as much as that!" rejoined Albert, shaking his head. "It is impossible for any man to trust the evidence of another's senses, so implicitly as his own. I will tell you what I have seen; and you will wonder at it, but you will not believe."

"Will not believe?"

"No—you will say I have been deceived. You will endeavor to explain on natural principles that which I regard as a miracle."

"A miracle! Hem!"

I looked to see a gleam of insanity in Dinsmore's eye. It was beautifully serene. He smiled calmly.

"Well, well!" I said, "proceed! I have not a remarkably large organ of marvelousness—but go on."

"Well—to begin—please examine this portrait."

He called my attention to a large picture which hung opposite the bed. I looked at it in surprise. It was that of a beautiful female. There appeared to be an intelligence in the dark eyes, and the lips seemed parting in order to speak. The rosy cheeks—the ivory neck—the soft white bosom and beautifully rounded arms, possessed a warmth and life-likeness, such as I had rarely—if ever seen before on canvas.

"What do you think of it?" asked Albert, with apparent interest.

"Wonderful! wonderful!"

"I knew you would say so!"

"It is perfect—beautiful!" I murmured. "Why in the name of friendship, Albert, have you never shown me this extraordinary picture before?"

"Because," replied my friend, sadly, "it has been the dearest object of my life, and I have felt a more than miser's joy in secluding my idol from every eye."

"And who—who is the artist?"

"Alas! the extraordinary youth whose talent produced this portrait died the day after its completion. *This* is his only great work; and into this he inspired the very life of his being. But you do not ask whose the portrait is."

"It is not then its artistic merits alone which endear it to you?"

"Its artistic merits! In the abstract, they are nothing to me. In effect—I see no art in this picture—it is life itself—perfect life. Just so," said Albert, with enthusiastic tenderness—"just so her soft eyes always beamed upon me—thus she always smiled—there was always that same expression of goodness and love in her beautiful face—"

"You are speaking of a person whom you ever loved."

"Loved! whom I adored! Yes—I mean my wife!"

"Ah! I had forgotten—that you were ever married."

"I never spoke to you of my domestic relations, it is time," said Dinsmore. "There have been so many painful associations connected with my marriage, that I could not allude to it without

experiencing a pang. But *now*—sit down; it will make me happy to tell you all.

"This portrait is the image of my Evelina. She was the only child of proud and wealthy parents, who looked contemptuously on me, dependant as I was upon my profession for a livelihood." And when, unable to conceal my intense love for the daughter, I betrayed my passion not only to her, but to others—the indignant father banished me from his house. But love like mine—love which was my life—could not be annihilated by hatred or contempt. I grew strong upon it. My ambition soared to a summit which it could never have attained, had not my passion been treated with disdain."

"By Evelina?"

"Oh, no! thank heaven, no! She was not indifferent to me, even at the first; and when she saw how strong my love was, and how bitterly it was opposed by her parents, she formed an attachment for me which nothing could subdue. She was one of those creatures in whom the flower of love is never of such rapid and vigorous growth, as when it is watered by the tears of sympathy.

"I was not long in learning the secret of Evelina's heart. I know she loved me. From that time the inequalities which interrupted the course of our true love, and added to my happiness, as I overcame them one by one. Young, ambitious, proud, and daring, I aimed at Evelina's hand."

"And you won it?"

"Yes—in the face of all opposition. Her parents, perceiving her inclination, haughtily told her that she must choose between them and me. A wife of a poor lawyer, they said, could not be a daughter of theirs. She chose—contrary to their expectations. I married her, and carried her in triumph to my humble yet comfortable home."

"Then followed dutiful, filial letters to the old people, I suppose."

"Evelina wrote, it is true. She desired her parents to think kindly of her, but she asked no favors. And it enraged the haughty Cushmans to think that she was comfortable, happy, wanting nothing! They loved her—she had been the idol of their affections and of their pride—but they would have had her suffer for following me.

"Several months passed without any communication between Evelina and her parents. One day, however, a load of splendid furniture arrived before my door. I happened to be passing out at the time.

"'What does this mean?' I asked of the teamster.

"'It is Mr. Cushman's order,' was the reply.

"'There must be some mistake,' said I. 'Mr.

Cushman has no right to send furniture to my door.'

"The man replied that there was no mistake; that the furniture was intended for my house; at the same time showing me a card, on which my address was written by Mr. Cushman's own hand.

"My heart swelled with proud disdain. In an imperative tone I forbid the man to place a single article of the furniture within my door.

"'Carry it back to Mr. Cushman!' I exclaimed—and they carried it back.

"Glowing in the thought that my independence must enrage the haughty old man, I hastened to inform Evelina of what I had done. To my surprise she burst into tears. She loved her parents, and she had longed to know that they forgave her. I felt that she blamed me for repelling the old man, when he had made the first advance toward a reconciliation, and at the same time I was conscious of having carried my resentment too far.

"Believing that her parents would be mortally offended by my conduct, we were both surprised to receive a visit from Evelina's mother, on the following day. Mother and daughter fell into each other's arms. Anxious to make my young wife happy, I treated her parent with civility, and left them to themselves.

"My resentment against the Cushmans faded in the sunlight of this apparent kindness. I gave my full permission that Evelina should visit her family, and receive them at our house. I forgave their pride; I supposed they had forgiven my independence. I was mistaken! All the while I was closing my eyes to designs against my happiness; I was giving scope and occasion to revenge. I one day returned from a prolonged absence to a neighboring city, whither I had gone on urgent business; I returned to find my house deserted. Evelina was gone! Her parents had carried her way!

"At first I was stupified with the suddenness of the calamity. As soon as I could realize the terrible truth, however, I set out in furious pursuit. I was too late! my wife had followed her parents to Europe.

"It is impossible to describe to you my grief. Had Evelina died before the evil influence of selfish relatives robbed me of her, I should have felt less sorrow. The thought that she had deserted me—that malice had extinguished her love—drove me to the verge of distraction. Her father had had his revenge!

"I cannot dwell on this period in my life," pursued Dinsmore, with agitation. "I loved Evelina still; and when the news came that she had died in Europe, I forgave her for the anguish she had caused me. I preserved this portrait with al-

the care and tenderness I should have felt for it had Evelina died in my arms.

"The artist had commenced his work immediately after our marriage, and after it was finished, my darling wife used to say, that, should she die before me, she would come in spirit and inhabit her picture. The fancy pleased me, and haunted me; but I never thought seriously of it until about the time I heard of Evelina's death. I observed a change in the appearance of the portrait. There was a *life* in it which I have never discovered before."

At this point of the narration I could not refrain from examining once more the extraordinary picture.

"From that time," pursued my friend, "I could never, on looking at the portrait, divest myself of the impression that the soul of my wife was regarding me through those beautiful eyes; and this fantasy—as you will call it—grew upon me, and night and day I worshipped the living picture of my lost, ingloried Evelina."

"It is natural," said I. "You have a susceptible imagination——"

"Hear me through," interrupted my friend. "A few days ago I was prostrated with a fever, from which my recovery has been a miracle.

"I mean to say, it is not to human agency I owe the preservation of my life. It is to the spirit which inhabits here——"

Dinsmore indicated the portrait.

"I know you will doubt—I am sure you will laugh at what you will call my folly—but I *must* tell you what I have seen. That portrait," cried Dinsmore, with vehemence—"Evelina—my wife—came and administered to me in my suffering."

"The portrait!"

"Yes. It was after my physician had given me up. I knew by his face that he despaired of saving my life. There, in the stillness of the night, when my watchers thought I slept—in the night, unseen by them, she—the penitent—started into life—came out from the canvas—bent over me and kissed me!"

The speaker's manner was strangely earnest. I regarded him in amazement.

"You mean," I said, "that such was the vision which appeared to you."

"It was a reality!" exclaimed my friend, solemnly. "I had been delirious; but I was not so then. The fever had left me too weak to stir. I was even too weak to speak. But I felt the kiss. A joy stole into my soul. I looked into the spiritual eyes—the angelic face—more lovely by far, freed from the dusky canvas, yet the same as you behold them there!"

"And this," said I—"was this all your dream?"

"My dream! I tell you it was no dream!" whispered Dinsmore, in an impressive tone. "The

portrait left its place—expanded into perfect life—bent over me—kissed me—and spoke. 'Live, oh, my love!' said she—my Evelina—in a soft, tremulous tone; 'live for me!' My lips moved to reply; but no murmur came to my relief—and the portrait—the figure of my Evelina—vanished.

"On the following morning, when the strength of which the fever had robbed me, partially returned, I inquired of my watchers if they had seen any vision during the night. They had seen nothing; and then I knew that the miracle had been manifest to my eyes alone.

"In the afternoon the fever returned. Delirium followed. It left me weak—almost lifeless—as before. Then again *she* came and bent over me. The angel came out of the canvas, pressed *warm* lips to mine, and whispered again—'live, oh, my love! live for me!' Then—then I found strength to murmur—

"Evelina—my wife!—is it you?"

"It is your own Evelina!" whispered the angel.

"She kissed me, and—on turning my eyes, I saw her looking sweetly down upon me from the canvas.

"For the last four-and-twenty hours I had grown no worse. The visits from the spirit of my beloved had inspired me with new life, and I now began slowly to recover.

"On the following night I was again favored; the portrait came down, kissed me, and having called me by name, and repeated the same exhortation to live, returned to the canvas. Yesterday I was a new man. The fever had left me. There was no attack of delirium last night, yet the portrait came to my bedside as before.

"Oh, my Evelina!" I said, as on awaking at midnight I saw her angelic form bending over me—saw her eyes looking serenely, lovingly down into my soul—"my dearest wife! I know you! Tell me—have you always loved me?"

"Always!—always!" murmured the spirit. "Even when I submitted to the power of my enemies of our peace, and left you, I loved you, Albert! They filled my ear with scandal, they played upon my weakness until I believed you unworthy—but still I loved you. I deserted your home—I left your heart desolate—but still I loved you. And you—you have forgiven me!"

"I have—I have with all my soul!" I murmured.

"Bless you! bless you, dearest!" whispered the angel.

"She kissed me again—I raised my arms to clasp her to my heart—but she was gone. I looked up. The portrait smiled upon me—as it smiles upon me now!"

Dinsmore sank back on the pillow, apparently exhausted. His earnest manner had convinced me that he firmly believed in the miracle he had

just related. To me it was all a mystery; and I was anxious to learn by what strange illusion he had been beguiled of his senses; but before I could question him the physician entered.

Dinsmore revived immediately. The doctor was surprised and delighted.

"I think it will be safe now," he muttered.

"What will be safe?" demanded Albert.

"To inform you of a singular circumstance which has taken place. Prepare yourself; and do not suffer yourself to be agitated."

"Well! well!"

"Be patient! I should have permitted you to hear the intelligence before, but I feared the shock would be fatal. As I understand, however, that, contrary to my directions, she has stolen into the room often during the night——"

"She? who?" cried Dinsmore.

"Be calm—be calm——"

"Who? Not—it cannot be——"

"Your wife," said the doctor.

"My wife! my Evelina! Oh, blessed heaven! is she," cried Albert—"is she alive?"

"Yes—my own Albert—my husband!" murmured a soft, fluttering voice.

A light figure darted past me. Albert uttered a cry of joy as he clasped it to his bosom. For nearly a minute I heard only a convulsive sobbing and weeping; then a tremulous voice—

"I heard you were dying—I could keep from you no longer! Do you forgive me? will you own me for your wife?"

"Forever! forever!" exclaimed Albert, in a choked voice.

I glided from the room.

Evelina's parents had caused a false report of her death to be circulated, and they had kept her secluded on their return to America. But now their influence was gone forever. Albert had recovered his wife.

A week later I was favored with a formal introduction to the LIVING PORTRAIT.

THE OMEN.

BY MARY V. SPENCER.

WHEN Mr. Warwick, on the evening of his wife's first reception, saw his magnificent rooms lighted up, and beheld the crowds of beauty and fashion that thronged to offer congratulations, he thought himself a happy man at last. The thirty years of toil, economy and self-denial, by which he had amassed his fortune, he regretted no longer. At fifty-five he had won a reigning belle, conspicuous among the leaders of fashion, and won her from amid a throng of admirers; and this he regarded as a triumph, for he knew that his hair was grey, and that his manners savored more of the counting-house than of the parlor.

Everybody pronounced the bride surpassingly lovely and exceedingly well-dressed. Even now her beauty would have been admitted, though it was rather of too haughty a character to be pleasing; but the good taste of her costume, which consisted of a gored skirt, antiquated sleeves, and an enormous comb, as was then the prevailing mode, would have won many skeptics. However, all who saw her on that evening were in raptures with her dress, which was of the costliest materials, and worn with an air of perfect fashion.

Mrs. Warwick, after the first rush of company was over, circulated among her guests, the gayest of the gay, leaving her husband, who was entirely unused to such entertainments, to take care of himself. A score of her old admirers were present, and with these she was soon occupied. Mr. Warwick, who had strict notions of propriety, was thunderstruck. Believing fondly that he had been married for himself alone, he was inexpressibly mortified at this neglect; while, unaccustomed to the license of a fashionable coquette, he was shocked at the freedom of his wife.

The evening that opened so happily for him, therefore, ended in bitter disappointment. It was the first time, since his wedding day, that he had been miserable. He and his bride, indeed, during their honeymoon trip, had lived only for each other. On her part this had been a matter of necessity, since they travelled entirely alone, as was to be expected; but on his it had been the most delightful period of his life, for he loved as madly as any lad of sixteen.

At last, however, the evening came to an end. When the last of the guests had departed, Mrs. Warwick flung herself on a sofa, in one of the

parlors, and declared she had never enjoyed herself so much, or been more tired.

Her husband, whose surprise and mortification had gradually deepened to anger, now approached her.

"I am glad," he said, "that you enjoyed yourself, my dear, but—"

He would have proceeded, only his wife, at this word, raised her large eyes in astonishment; and he was silent.

"But what, Mr. Warwick?" she said; and seeing he still remained silent, she continued, with a touch of contempt, "go on!"

The truth was that, intoxicated by the flattery she had received that evening, Mrs. Warwick began to think that, even with the recompense of her husband's large fortune, she had made a sacrifice of herself.

Her manner more than her words irritated Mr. Warwick, who, uxorious as he was, had a high spirit, combined with a true sense of his own dignity. He answered severely, therefore,

"Well then, madam, I was about to say that one would have thought you a miss, instead of a matron, from your conduct this evening. In short, I did not like the way in which you talked with some of those empty fops, or the familiar manner in which you waltzed. However," he added, with returning mildness, "I dare say it was mere thoughtlessness, and that you will do so no more."

But these words, intended to be conciliatory, only inflamed the haughty wife more than ever. That she, the courted beauty, should be lectured by a husband whom she had married for his wealth alone, was intolerable. She sprang to her feet.

"What is it I hear?" she cried. "You don't like my waltzing, you think I talk too much with gentlemen."

"That is it," said Mr. Warwick, astonished at this rage, in one he had thought so meek, but resolved to stand his ground firmly.

"Then let me tell you," she continued, "that you are an old fool. What, lecture me like one of your clerks, and on proper behavior in society, a thing of which you, *parvenu* as you are, know nothing. Oh! it is precious farcical," and she laughed ironically. "No, sir, I did not marry you to be your slave."

Poor Mr. Warwick saw all his visions of conjugal

felicity fading. In place of the angel he thought he had married he beheld a female fury. But he determined to make another effort.

"You are excited, my dear," he said. "But I do not wish to be unjust. All I ask is that you should respect yourself and me; and I know that you will do it, my love, when you reflect."

As he spoke, he approached her to take her hand; but this attempt at a caress inflamed the spoiled beauty to madness.

"Don't touch me, you brute," she said, springing back. The words were hardly out of her mouth before there was a terrific crash. She had, by her sudden movement, overthrown a superb girandole, which stood on a table, and the next minute poor Mr. Warwick was dancing with pain, the fragments having fallen on his toes.

A laugh, from the opposite room, attracted the angry wife's attention, as she stood, for a moment, sulkily silent: she turned, more amazed than ever, to see one of the fiddlers, who had remained in the other parlor, hurrying laughingly out of the apartment.

"You eaves-dropping scoundrel," she cried, rushing after him, and throwing her bouquet angrily at the fugitive, "what do you mean by laughing. Leave the house this minute. And as for you, Mr. Warwick," she continued, a moment after, turning to her astonished husband, "let me tell you, once for all, a bit of my mind. I didn't marry to be lectured, and I won't stand it. I shall talk to whom I please and waltz with whom I please, and, if you don't like it, you may show then your disapproval as you best can. I shall be mistress of my own house, sir, and do as I please. I conferred honor enough on you, by marrying you."

Mr. Warwick was struck dumb, and his wife seized the occasion to flounce out of the room. He remained, for nearly an hour, buried in thought, and then said, with a sigh,

"Alas! many such scenes are before me, I fear. Fool, to think that a coquette could love one of my age."

His prognostications proved true, for this scene was but an omen of many others.